Politics of Patience

Lessons on sovereignty and subjectivity from failed fieldwork in Rwanda

Løvgren, Rose

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PhD Thesis

Rose Løvgren

Politics of Patience

Lessons on sovereignty and subjectivity from failed fieldwork in Rwanda

Supervisors: Simon Turner, Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen & Robin May Schott, Danish Institute for International Studies

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University of Copenhagen
Faculty of Humanities, Saxo Institute

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Abstract

The thesis addresses practices of the state in Rwanda, and the experiences and reactions of those subjected to these practices. The Rwandan state has a long history of ordering and exercising intense control over its people. The most atrocious example played out from April to July in 1994 when the erstwhile government initiated a genocide attempting eradicate a whole part of the population. Since the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) overthrew this government the party has remained in power, and RPF to a large extent continues the tradition of reaching into and practicing regulation over some of the most intimate aspects of life in Rwanda. The thesis contributes to current research by paying special attention to the instability of the surfaces of the state and those subjected to its rule. It examines how the state's many violent transgressions and changing agendas effect routinized uncertainty about what the state actually wants from its subjects. Politics of Patience refers to the precarious political, social and economic situation in Rwanda that produce patient political subjectivities, and in turn to the politics effected by those subjectivities. The study is based on fieldwork as well as what I term failed fieldwork about the rehabilitation center for 'delinquent' male youth on Iwawa Island in Lake Kivu, amounting to 13 months. Based on fieldwork where I could do little to influence the process and which ended in deportation, I read my fragmented empirical material on different political practices together by emphasizing the examples in which state violence spills over and multiplies beyond the state's utility. Related to this form of violence, I draw on my autoethnographic experiences with sexually harassing state representatives and read them together with other forms of empirical material to highlight the ways in which local representatives of sovereignty influence the state's agendas, creating messes and arbitrariness in political practice. In a context marked by unpredictability, the thesis examines practices of patience, acceptance and compliance among those exposed to the state's power. This focus is partly motivated by Saba Mahmood's argument that these are understudied and undertheorized aspects of how people relate to power both in- and outside of Rwanda. The thesis analyzes acceptance in the context of understanding negative emotions as destructive and devastating to survival of extreme hardships. It moreover analyzes descriptions of a patient and compliant attitude as a response to a sense that the authorities were trying to trick my respondents into making themselves arrestable. Drawing on a poststructuralist reading of Ashis Nandy and Seyla Benhabib, I characterize fragmented and shifting subjectivities whose agency does not rest in an undominated core, but in the exercise of control over the narrative they tell themselves or others. That is, even though practices of compliance may at times exhibit contradictions or a commitment to subordination, agency is retained in the continued capacity for narration. And with it, the capacity to change the story should circumstances change.

Resumé

Afhandlingen omhandler statens praksisser i Rwanda, samt oplevelserne og reaktionerne hos dem der bliver udsat for disse praksisser. Staten i Rwanda har en lang tradition for at udøve intens administration og kontrol over sit folk. Det grusomste eksempel fandt sted mellem april og juli i 1994, da den daværende regering igangsatte et folkedrab i et forsøg på at udrydde en del af befolkningen. Siden Rwandas Patriotiske Front (RPF) styrtede denne regering har partiet forblevet ved magten, og RPF fortsætter i høj grad statens praksis med at række ind i og regulere nogle af de mest intime aspekter af livet i Rwanda. Afhandlingen bidrager til forskningen ved at rette særlig opmærksomhed mod ustabiliteten i overfladerne på både staten og dem staten udøver sin magt på. Den undersøger hvordan statens mange voldelige overskridelser af grænser og skiftende agendaer skaber gennemgående usikkerhed omkring hvad staten faktisk vil have fra sine undersåtter. Tålmodighedens politik refererer til den prekære politiske, sociale og økonomiske situation i Rwanda som producerer tålmodige politiske subjektiviteter, og omvendt til den politik der skabes af disse subjektiviteter. Studiet er baseret på feltarbejde, såvel som hvad jeg kalder mislykket feltarbejde, om rehabiliteringscenteret for 'afvigende' unge mænd placeret på øen Iwawa i Kivu-søen – i alt 13 måneder. Baseret på feltarbejde hvor jeg havde begrænset indflydelse på processen, og som endte i deportation, binder jeg mit fragmenterede empiriske materiale vedrørende forskellige politiske praksisser sammen ved at fokusere på de eksempler, hvori statens vold flyder over og formerer sig udover, hvad der er til brug for staten. Relateret til denne form for vold trækker jeg på mine autoetnografiske oplevelser med sexchikanerende repræsentanter for staten, og læser dem sammen med andre empiriske eksempler for at fremhæve de måder hvorpå lokale repræsentanter for suverænitet har indflydelse på statens agendaer, og skaber rod og vilkårlighed i politisk praksis. I en kontekst præget af uforudsigelighed, undersøger afhandlingen praksisser præget af tålmodighed, accept og indvilligelse blandt de mennesker, staten udøver sin magt på. Motivationen for at lægge vægt på disse praksisser er delvist baseret på Saba Mahmood's argument om, at de er lidet undersøgte og underteoretiserede aspekter af, hvordan mennesker forholder sig til magt både inden i og uden for Rwanda. Afhandlingen analyserer accept i en kontekst, hvor negative følelser opfattes som farlige og potentielt ødelæggende for overlevelse af ekstreme lidelser. Den analyserer ydermere beskrivelser af en tålmodig og indvilligende indstilling som en reaktion på en opfattelse af, at autoriteterne prøvede at narre mine respondenter til at gøre sig selv arresterbare. Ved at trække på en poststrukturalistisk læsning af Ashis Nandy og Seyla Benhabib, karakteriserer jeg fragmenterede og skiftende subjektiviteter, hvis agens ikke hviler i en udomineret kerne, men i udøvelsen af kontrol over det narrativ de fortæller sig selv eller andre. Det vil sige, at selvom praksisser præget af indvilligelse somme tider indeholder modsigelser eller en tilknytning til underordnelse, bevares agens i den fortsatte evne til at fortælle. Og med den, evnen til at ændre historien, skulle vilkårene ændre sig.

To Odette Mubelijike

Ubugabo ni ubwuzura inzira

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FDLR	*Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*/ Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ID	Identification Card
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MININFRA	Ministry of Infrastructure
MRND	*Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement*/ The National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development
MYICT	Ministry of Youth and Information and Communication Technologies
NYC	National Youth Council
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation
Parmehutu	*Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu*/ Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement
PRI	Penal Reform International
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RPA	Rwanda Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
TIG	*Travaux d'intérêt general*/ labor camps
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WDA	Workforce Development Authority

Glossary

Kinyarwanda, unless otherwise indicated

amacakubiri	divisionism
amajyambere	development
ergon	actuality (Ancient Greek)
gacaca	precolonial and recently reinvented community courts
genocidaire	genocide perpetrator (French)
guhumura	to be calm/ to be comfortable
ingando	encamped civic education for selected groups
ingengabitekerezo ya jenoside	genocide ideology
interahamwe	'those who attack together'/ initially a youth wing of MRND. The name came to refer to all killing groups during the course of the 1994 genocide.
itorero	encamped civic education for high school/ secondary school graduates
kubabara	to suffer/ to be in need/ to be hurt
kugorwa	to be unfortunate/ to be exposed to trouble
kuzira	to hate/ to loath/ to consider abominable
kwanga	to refuse
kwemera	to accept/ to respect
kwihangana	to be patient/ to bear with/ to endure
kwihutisha	to rush
pathos	experience/ suffering/ misfortune/ calamity (Ancient Greek)
polis	political sphere (Ancient Greek)
oikos	household sphere (Ancient Greek)
uburetwa	unpaid labor in return for access to land
ubwenge	wisdom
ubwihangane	patience/ endurance/ forbearance
ubwoba	fear
umudugudu (pl. *imidugudu*)	village
umunyarwanda (pl. *abanyarwanda*)	Rwandan
umuzungu (pl. *abazungu*)	white person

1. Introduction

Not long ago, I sat on one of Kigali's motos (motorcycle taxis) behind the moto driver, searching through my bag to find money to pay him when we arrived at my destination. Turning my bag around to see into it, I accidentally jabbed him in the back with my elbow. Without thinking, I simply blurted out "*wihangane*" – be patient. I was slightly shocked to hear myself say this. It was the first time, I had ever used this expression in a situation, where I had done something wrong. During one of my first Kinyarwanda lessons in 2013, my teacher told me a simple distinction. If I wanted to say sorry because I had done something wrong, I should say *mbabarira* – forgive me. If I wanted to express that I was sorry for someone else's situation, I should say *wihangane* – be patient. For a while I therefore used to say *mbabarira* every time I wanted to apologize, to the amusement of every person who heard it. Eventually my friends explained to me that I was making a spectacle with my overuse of this word. *Mbabarira*, they explained, is used in situations where you are throwing yourself at someone's feet begging for mercy and forgiveness. Don't use it when you stepped on someone's toes, they told me. When I asked my teacher how I should be saying sorry in a less dramatic way, he told me to just say *wihangane*. But that's also the expression I would use, if I had no responsibility, I complained. How can I be using the same expression for both cases? Well, if you insist, you can be saying *nyihanganira*, be patient with me, when you are the one who is responsible, he told me. This option seemed preferable to me. It felt too awkward to respond to problems I had caused, the same way I would to someone who stumbled on her own. I have been saying *nyihanganira* since 2014, and in all this time, I can't remember ever hearing a Rwandan use the expression. My practice of placing myself at the center of the apology, and essentially tell someone I just wronged to be easy on me, is at least as awkward as if I was just telling them to be patient.

In this thesis, I continue to grapple with where to place responsibility and agency within uses and meanings of patience in Rwanda. The thesis explores a range of ways in which sovereignty works in Rwanda, which I analyze together under the term 'Politics of Patience'. Politics of Patience refers to the precarious political, social and economic situation in Rwanda that produce patient political subjectivities, and in turn to the politics effected by those subjectivities. I use the term political subjectivity to engage how people relate to political power and authorities. The term is moreover used to emphasize the role played by structures of power in shaping the subjective experience of both individuals and groups

(Schramm and Krause 2011).

The point of departure for my analysis is ethnographic fieldwork as well as what I term failed ethnographic fieldwork. In 2013-2014, I did fieldwork in Rwanda about the Iwawa Rehabilitation Centre, a place where young men termed 'delinquent' (MYICT 2012) for different reasons, spend 1-3 years being rehabilitated on Iwawa Island in Lake Kivu. When I attempted to continue this research for my PhD in 2015, I spent one and a half years unsuccessfully trying to get a research permit before I was deported in April 2016. Thus, while I have spent more than three years of my life in Rwanda and have been able to return to the country since, the empirical material I have collected through structured methods, e.g. planned participant observation, interviews etc., is limited. Instead of having a big amount of empirical material on one subject delimited by a clearly identifiable theme – such as male youth drug rehabilitation – I therefore have fragmented sets of empirical material that I happened upon in a research context where I could do little to plan and control the process of obtaining it. These fragments concern different political phenomena, but they all relate to the state's engagements with bodies, especially the violences directed at bodies in Rwanda, and what this violence does to them.

Specifically, my empirical material relates firstly to my original research interest in the state's attempt at reaching into and regulating the intimate lives of young men as expressed in the Iwawa rehabilitation program. As the force of this attempt made my respondents from the island feel that they were "living with death", I analyze the form of sovereignty at work in this space of transformation and abandonment. My empirical material moreover relates to my autoethnographic experiences of failure in research. Firstly, my sense of ethical failure during research interviews, where my interviewees expressed anxiety about the loss of control brought on by talking to me about sensitive subjects (such as exposure to death during Iwawa rehabilitation) constitutes part of my empirical engagement with forms of political subjectivity in Rwanda. With a point of departure in these experiences, I analyze the powerful and destructive potential attributed to emotions by my respondents, and how this perspective matters for understanding their relations to the state, its representatives and its programs. Secondly, my field relationship with a sexually harassing state representative, who had significant influence over whether my research would be possible, is part of the empirical material I use to characterize what the state is and how state violence works. State authority as exercised in sexually harassing or abusing encounters is one example of the porous boundaries between state and personal agendas. Reading this experience together with other forms of empirical material, I analyze the instability of the state's surfaces. That is, I discuss the difficulty of distinguishing between the state's official and unofficial practices. Finally, my empirical material consists of "accidental moments" (Fujii 2015, 2) taking place between formalized research activities. These moments did not relate to one specific political initiative, but concern different ways in which my respondents experienced power, authority and

the state in their everyday lives. These examples relate, for example, to inter-generational land disputes and local political meetings commemorating the genocide that took place in 1994. What ties these fields together is my choice to relate them to each other, as they speak in different ways to politics of patience. In this way, the thesis is not an ethnography of a place or a people but of a set of political phenomena happening in a place and among a people.

With regards to the subtitle of this thesis, one might object that I did amass a great deal of relevant experiences during my periods of research. Should I really be calling my fieldwork 'failed'? For several reasons, I, however, find that this term best describes my field experiences, and I will expand on these reasons in chapter 3. To introduce these discussions, let me note that failed does not mean unproductive. Failures can produce a lot of insights about the power structures at play in a situation. However, I still consider my experiences failures, rather than an unexpected turn in the field research process that lead to success. My ethical failures in the interview situation might be happening in many research settings, but I venture that they are still rightly considered failures. My field relationships with sexually harassing gatekeepers may have helped me frame my approach to state violence, but it did not feel like an alternative road to success, and from both a personal and epistemological perspective, I would have rather been without them.

The reason I foreground patience, in the title and in my analyses, is to explore important questions about political subjectivity, notably practices of compliance and acceptance. And by examining political subjectivity I also speak to the ways in which sovereignty works in my empirical examples. That is, by analyzing my respondents' accounts of being subjected to sovereign violence, I make characterizations of what this form of violence does. Foregrounding patience in my analyses of political subjectivity in Rwanda is not intended as a characterization of political culture in the country as such. As I will keep coming back to in the course of the thesis, many political actors in Rwanda practice both covert and overt non-compliance and resistance. My emphasis on patience, acceptance and compliance is based on my contention that these are understudied and undertheorized aspects of political subjectivity, which constitutes both moral and analytical wrongdoing. Moral wrongdoing because lack of attention to practices of compliance implies that people do not matter as much when they comply as they do when they resist. Analytical wrongdoing because the agency expressed in compliance can teach us about the many aspects of political subjectivity and about sovereign violence. Patience, in my empirical examples, was often framed as a response to the randomness and incoherence of the initiatives of the state in Rwanda. Patience is thus my entry point for discussing important aspects about how sovereignty works in a centralized and omnipresent state like the Rwandan. To introduce the context of the contemporary state in Rwanda, the upcoming section presents a brief historical overview of practices of sovereignty in Rwanda.

A brief history of sovereignty in Rwanda

The state in Rwanda has a long history of exercising a high degree of control over its population. Where the territories of many other contemporary postcolonies contain a multitude of languages and cultural practices, there has been a tendency to describe precolonial Rwanda as a coherent political entity (Van Schuylenbergh 2016). After Germany began its colonial occupation of Rwanda in 1894, the Nyiginya kingdom and the colonial administration both had vested interests in making the country appear uniform across the territory, and bringing it under their collective administrative control (Prunier 1995). [1] The German administration referred to the kingdom's 'traditional' territory in negotiations with Uganda's British colonial administration over the border between the two colonies (D. Newbury 2011). King Yuhi Musinga, his nobility and his court used the additional military force provided by Germany and later Belgium to fight political opponents and increase the kingdom's reach (Pottier 2002; Des Forges 2011). Both parties, as well as anthropologists (e.g. Kandt 1904; Maquet 1961), thus participated in producing an account of tradition in Rwanda which made the kingdom appear to be a coherent territorial administration, minimizing and forcefully cancelling the local autonomy of Rwanda's other political systems (C. Newbury 1988; Mamdani 2002; Vansina 2004).

Both colonial administrations moreover worked to racialize Rwanda's ethnic groups, hutu, tutsi and twa, which formed a central part of how the genocide of 1994 would later take place. All three groups speak the same language and share most cultural and religious practices, and historians working on Rwanda have traced the first practices of ethnic distinction to the beginning of the state making of Nyiginya (ibid). Both hutu and twa have been characterized as identities that arose as products of the tutsi monarchy's efforts to distinguish itself from other Kinyarwanda speakers (ibid; C. C. Taylor 2011).[2] Two new elements of ethnic discrimination are attributed to Rwanda's colonial administrations. The first was a claimed 'scientific', deeply racist interpretation of ethnic difference. The second was the practice of colonial rule in which major social, political, and economic burdens were placed overwhelmingly on those with hutu ethnicity (Pottier 2002). When the British imperial officer, John Speke, first encountered representatives of the kingdom of Karagwe (neighboring Nyiginya), he characterized them as having "fine oval faces, large eyes and high noses denoting the best blood of Abyssinia" (Speke 1864, 203). Speke developed this impression into the 'Hamitic theory'[3], a

[1] Alison Des Forges explains Nyiginya's motivation for cooperation as relating partly to internal power struggles, which had left the kingdom with weakened military capacity to resist occupation (Des Forges 2011).

[2] The early exacerbations in the oppression of hutu have been related to the many military excursions of Nyiginya during the 19th century (C. Newbury 1988; Webster, Ogot, and Chrétien 1999; Vansina 2004).

[3] Named after the biblical character 'Ham', from which Speke imagined Hamites to have descended (Sanders 1969).

theory which Europeans in Rwanda used to equate tutsi with hamites, meaning they were believed to originate from Northern Africa, and thus to be more closely related to Europeans (Sanders 1969; Vansina 2004). This idea motivated the colonial perception that they were racially superior and more suited for rule (Sanders 1969; Prunier 1995). Belgium took over the colonial occupation of Rwanda in 1916 and later introduced mandatory identity cards (IDs) as part of an effort to facilitate taxation. Movement from one village to another without IDs was thereby made illegal (Uvin 2002). In 1935, ethnicity was added to these cards, and from this point forward, ethnicity in Rwanda became static and was inherited from ones father (Des Forges 1999).[4] Coercion through taxation greatly increased under Belgian rule together with the practice known as *uburetwa*. *Uburetwa* consists of unpaid labor by hutu farmers in return for access to land controlled by the royal court or its nobility (Pottier 2002). Belgian colonial rule altered the practice in two major ways. Firstly, the extractive ambitions of the colonial administration greatly increased the amount of labor involved, as the Belgians attempted to turn the ruling nobility into coffee entrepreneurs. Secondly, Belgium enforced *uburetwa* on all adult men, as opposed to the previous practice where the obligation could be met at lineage level. All adult males were now "called upon more frequently and more regularly to perform *ubureetwa*" (C. Newbury 1981, 142). While non-royal tutsi were also heavily exploited under Belgian and Nyiginya rule, they were not obliged to perform *uburetwa* (Reyntjens 1985; Rwabukumba and Mudandagizi 1974; Pottier 2002).

Between 1958 and 1962, a small group of Catholic-educated hutu overthrew the monarchy in Rwanda. Under the name of a 'social revolution', these actors argued that hutu as opposed to tutsi were the legitimate inhabitants and rulers of Rwanda (Uvin 2002). Like colonial rule, anti-tutsi agendas also characterized tutsi as non-indigenous to Rwanda and claimed that they for centuries had been illegitimately occupying the land (Jessee 2017). In 1960 and 1961, *Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation hutu* (Parmehutu), a radical anti-tutsi party, won legislative elections and subsequently overthrew the monarchy. These elections were followed by localized massacres of tutsi in some provinces (Uvin 2002). In the time after the violence that followed the elections, between 130,000 and 300,000 Rwandans, most of whom identifying themselves as tutsi, are estimated to have fled to Uganda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Europe (Burnet 2012, 15). Under Parmehutu, Rwanda quickly became a *de facto* one-party state in which the arbitrary exercise of power by local state representatives followed the structure of the previous nobility's oppressive rule (Reyntjens 1987; C. C. Taylor 2004).

Gregoire Kayibanda, President and leader of Parmehutu, was overthrown in 1973 by his Major General, Juvénal Habyarimana, who would go on to lead the

[4] Prior to Belgian colonial rule, a system of social mobility, called *kwihutira*, shedding hutuness, had allowed some people to change identities during their lifetime, through cattle accumulation or marriage. The Belgian colonial regime removed the institution of *kwihutira* and relied only on their censuses to formally distinguish tutsi from hutu (Mamdani 2002).

new government party *Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement* (MRND). MRND was founded in 1975 as a "national party" (Jessee 2017, 9) of which all Rwandans were automatically members. Habyarimana continued to draw on the narrative that a hutu dominated government was the most democratic way to represent the population, as well as the only way to defend Rwanda's 'real' people from being once again enslaved by the tutsi (Uvin 2002). While Parmehutu and MRND ruled largely without interference from Rwandan opposition, the agenda of the country's former colonial powers continued to heavily influence their political agendas. Coffee prices dropped drastically in 1987 and 1989, and this happened at the same time as a famine caused by drought and crop failures in southern Rwanda (Verwimp 2003). Responding to this pressure, the MRND state started practicing increasingly extractive governance while also strongly restricting movements and freedoms of press and assembly (Jessee 2017). Under pressure from the European Economic Community in 1989, Habyarimana moreover agreed to a Structural Adjustment Program with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), leading to widespread cuts in public spending (D. Newbury 1998). The international community in Rwanda, which was mostly represented by donors, moreover pushed to initiate a process towards multi-party democracy in 1990 (Pottier 2002). By that time, Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) had mobilized. The army was the military wing of the political organization, Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), which consisted mostly of tutsi from the Ugandan diaspora (ibid). RPA started launching guerilla attacks in Northern Rwanda from October 1990. Anti-tutsi sentiments among hutu in Rwanda grew and the political mobilization of extremism moved into higher gear. Early massacres of tutsi began in 1992 and 1993 in Bugesera and Gisenyi. The UN, France and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) organized peace negotiations between RPF and MRND in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1992. The resulting agreement, known as the 'Arusha Accords', led to RPF entering Kigali in early 1994 under UN escort (Pottier 2002; Jessee 2017).

Flying home from finalizing negotiations in Arusha on 6 April 1994, the plane carrying Habyarimana and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down by unknown assailants,[5] as it was landing in Kigali. In the thirteen weeks that followed, the Presidential Guard, members of the MRND youth wing called

[5] A French-led six year long investitation, undertaken because the two pilots flying the plane were French nationals, concludes that the RPF was responsible for shooting down the plane (Smith 2004). Former members of the RPF, now living in exile, have made the same argument (Onana and Mushayidi 2002; Ruzibiza 2005; cf. Straus 2008, 45). Among academic scholars, this thesis has been defended by Gerard Prunier (1995). The RPF government, in return, commissioned a report published in 2018, which alleges that French officials arrived on the crash site immediately after the plane went down and subsequently obstructed the investigation, leading to the conspiracy theories that worked to motivate the genocide perptrators, in Rwanda called *genocidaires* (Muse, Levy, and Firestone 2017).

Interahamwe, soldiers of the national army, policemen, and killing groups organized by various state authorities attempted to permanently rid Rwanda of tutsi. As a result, an estimated 5-800,000 tutsi,[6] as well as hutu and twa opposing the killing campaigns were murdered (Des Forges 1999; Straus 2008). An estimated 250,000-500,000 women were victims of genocide-related sexual violence (Baines 2003; Zraly 2008; Burnet 2012). Most were tutsi, but hutu and twa women who had married or had children with tutsi men were also targeted (Des Forges 1999). The ethnic marker on IDs, which had remained in force since Belgian occupation, greatly facilitated the genocide. Due to road blocks organized by representatives of the state, everyone on the move from April to July had to show their ID, making it easy to identify and murder those of tutsi ethnicity. In the words of Gerard Prunier, the genocide may be considered a symptom of the "almost monstrous degree of social control" (Prunier 1995, 3) historically exercised by states in Rwanda. While research on the popular participation in genocide has shown that many hutu avoided participation, it has also shown the intimidation and threats practiced by local representatives of state authority to force previously unarmed hutu to take up weapons (Wagner 1998; Fujii 2009). Some killing groups were formed as the local authorities first required 'volunteers' to perform patrols, which escalated into looting and ultimately the murder of tutsi. The escalation led to horrific scenarios, where some of the atrocities included pregnant women having their infants cut out of them, and hutu married to tutsi being forced to kill their spouses (Des Forges 1999; Fujii 2009).

The genocide ended with the government overthrow by RPF. RPF is estimated to have killed 3-400,000 hutu on their way to seize power and in the following years' revenge missions (Davenport and Stam 2009; Lemarchand 2018). Both the genocide and RPF's legacy of guerilla tactics still thoroughly affect how the state works in contemporary Rwanda. With reference to the need for national security and reconstruction, the RPF has undertaken forceful and violent interventions in- and outside[7] of the country. RPF departs from the earlier governments' emphasis on ethnicity, and has declared that 'hutu', 'tutsi' and 'twa' mostly represent the legacy of the colonial administrations' strategies to divide the Rwandan people and diminish their strength to act in unison (A. Shyaka 2004; NURC 2011). In 2002, a political campaign against *amacakubiri*, meaning divisionism, was launched, which

[6] The big difference in the numbers relate partly to the MRND government's practices of manipulating population statistics, and of reporting suspiciously consistent census results also in prior years with proven massacres of tutsi (Uvin 2002). Moreover, the RPF government has been accused of manipulating the statistics by counting victims of RPF violence among victims of the genocide (Davenport and Stam 2009).

[7] Many of the former *genocidaires* who escaped to DRC organized into *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), which remains an armed group working in Eastern DRC to this day. RPF has led two large-scale military invasions into DRC. These interventions were justified by referring to the threat of Rwandan *genocidaires*. However, various sources of academic literature and international reports point to other motives, such as the exploitation of natural resources (Prunier 2010; Stearns 2011).

has effected the public silencing of talk about ethnicity (Thomson 2013; Purdeková 2015). Two years later the campaign turned into a campaign against *ingenga-bitekerezo ya jenoside*, which translates as "genocide ideology" (HRW 2008, 37). A law was passed in 2008, according to which a person may be sentenced up to 25 years for expressions or acts of genocide ideology (Republic of Rwanda 2008, art. 4, 8). Among other efforts to handle the aftermath of the genocide, the RPF government decided in 2002 to reinvent a precolonial system for dispute resolution, the *gacaca*, to operate as genocide tribunals (Chakravarty 2016a). This was done in part because neither the national courts, nor the prisons could handle the multiple accusations of participation in genocide (Tertsakian 2008). In the course of a decade, an estimated 1,958,634 genocide-related cases were tried through *gacaca* (Jessee 2017, 13). During the 2000s, the prisons and the *gacaca* penal infrastructure were supported by the political re-education camps, *ingando*, and the labor camps, known by their French abbreviation, TIG, *travaux d'intérêt general* (Chakravarty 2016a, 16). Subsequently, vast amounts of people started circulating between these spaces of closure. Confessing to crimes in *gacaca* could move the interned from pre-trial detention to prison, to re-education and then onwards to TIG (ibid). Whereas the highest estimation among scholars of how many hutu participated in the genocide is 10% (Lemarchand 2000, 2; cf. Eltringham 2004, 69), *gacaca* has convicted a "little less than 1 in 3" of those who were "adult Hutu at the time of genocide" (Chakravarty 2016a, 4). In contrast to the intense prosecution of perpetrators of genocide, in Rwanda called *genocidaries*, the current government has opposed any investigation[8] of crimes committed during the 1990s war, the genocide and in the following years by RPF (HRW 2014). Government assistance responding to conflict, war, and genocide-related harm, such as education support, subsidized housing and provision of basic necessities have almost exclusively been awarded to those who can claim tutsi ethnicity (Burnet 2012; T. P. Williams 2015; Sundberg 2016; Løndorf 2017). The combination of these exclusions and political initiatives targeting hutu as a group[9] have caused a number of scholars to argue that RPF operates with a notion of collective hutu guilt for the genocide (e.g. Eltringham 2004; Tertsakian 2008; Thomson 2011a).

The contemporary state in Rwanda's electoral system is overwhelmingly dominated by RPF (Sundberg 2016). While Rwanda today has multiple political parties, regular elections, and a formal separation of powers, its practices constitute a *de facto* one party-state (Longman 2011; Reyntjens 2015a).[10] Former leader of RPA, Paul Kagame has formally served as President since 2000 and was elected in

[8] Including by the UN court, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

[9] Such as the *Ndi Umunyarwanda* activities, wherein hutu are made to ask tutsi for forgiveness on behalf of their ethnic group, even if they were born after 1994 (Blackie and Hitchcott 2018).

[10] A total of ten parties currently operate in the government (Mumbere 2018). The parties besides RPF form a coalition, which in Rwanda is often referred to as the extension of RPF (Hintjens 2008; Reyntjens 2015a).

2003, 2010 and 2017 with respectively 95, 93, and 99 percent of the votes (HRW 2017). Freedoms of press, speech and association are severely restricted, and the government regularly undertakes "restructuring" (Waldorf 2011, 52) or closure of opposition parties, newspapers and human rights organizations. Restructuring has included the arrest, intimidation or murder of newspaper editors and leaders of opposition parties and the replacement of these people with members of RPF (Reporters sans frontières 2011; Stys 2012; Sundaram 2015).[11] None of these activities have done much to take away from Rwanda's status as a "darling" (Hagmann and Reyntjens 2016, 5) of international donors and investors,[12] who account for an estimated 40% of its annual budget (Jessee 2017, 12). RPF's Rwanda has been lauded by international development institutions (among others) for its high economic growth rates, business climate and progressive approach to issues like political gender representation (see for example IMF Communications Department 2018; UN 2019; World Bank Group 2019).

Orders and disorders of the state

Rwanda's practices of intense government control has caused a lot of ethnographers and other scholars working in Rwanda to call out the difference between what RPF wants the world to see, and what "ordinary Rwandans" (Thomson 2013, xiv) actually experience, believe and desire. These arguments often draw on James Scott's analytical distinction between 'the public transcript' defined as "the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen" (Scott 2007, 200, *original emphasis*) and 'the hidden transcript'. The hidden transcript is understood as the off stage situation "where subordinates may gather outside the intimidating gaze of power [and] a sharply dissonant political culture is possible" (Scott 2007, 201). Scott argues that systems of power extract from their subjects in both material (as reflected in taxes and forced labor) and symbolic ways (Scott 1990). Symbolic extractions, reflected in public displays of obedience, work to reproduce unequal power relations, as they provide both the powerful and their subjects with the public transcript (Rollason 2018). With respect to political subjectivity, Scott's focus is on how people respond to power by articulating their resistance in the

[11] In total, Anjan Sundaram has listed sixty journalists who were killed, arrested, attacked, or intimidated and threatened in the years 1995-2014 (Sundaram 2015).

[12] Donors have suspended their financial support to RPF's Rwanda a few times in relation to the government's military interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Zorbas 2011). A recent example of this occurred in 2012, when new reports emerged of the Rwandan government's support of a militia in North Kivu called the M23 (UNSC 2012). A number of Western governments then suspended all or parts of their aid to Rwanda (Marriage 2016). However, RPF continues to deny any 'unjustified' military activities in DRC, and since 2012, several of the Western donor governments have resumed their support to Rwanda in various ways (Sundberg 2016).

hidden transcript. "[E]very day resistance" (Scott 2000, 27) thus typically takes place through discreet acts of subversion, subtle defiance, and derision. Together these counter-narratives form the hidden transcript and disrupt the authority and legitimacy of the powerful (Rollason 2018).

Scholars emphasizing the difference between RPF's public transcript and ordinary Rwandan's hidden transcript respond to the way governance in Rwanda has been framed in popular media, within development institutions, and in some parts of scholarship as "African renaissance" (cf. Marriage 2016, 45), "rebuilding with real progress" (Guttman 2015), and a country well on its way to become "a thriving, middle income, regional trade and investment hub" (DFID 2013; see also Kinzer 2008; Crisafulli and Redmond 2014; World Bank 2017). The Scott-inspired body of work contains important and thoroughly substantiated empirical examples of the ways in which e.g. RPF's agricultural policies, housing policies, and education policies affect the lives of especially the country's rural population to the point, where survival becomes nearly impossible (Ingelaere 2014; Huggins 2014; Williams 2016; Ansoms et al. 2017). One example is RPF's monocropping policies, developed to direct Rwanda's agricultural production towards the world market and vehemently enforced by Rwanda's many local authorities, which have caused many farming families to starve when they could not sell their cash crops or when failed government planning meant that they did not get seeds in time for sowing (Huggins 2009; Van Damme, Ansoms, and Baret 2014).

Recognizing the importance of these academic endeavors, I nonetheless still problematize Scott's analytical distinction between the public and hidden transcript, and the way his framework is applied in the context of Rwanda. Briefly stated, I argue that there are a multitude of examples of the RPF not having a stable public transcript. It adds to our understanding of how intense and intimate government control and violence works, to analyze the way the state is not uniform across different institutions, persons and places, even when everyone involved represents RPF and reports to the central government.

The intense administrative ordering of the state in Rwanda is paralleled by attending offices of RPF. According to a respondent of Andrea Purdeková "at all administrative levels the two structures are there" (Purdeková 2015, 93). Moreover, the state's administrative personnel are widely reported to be under intense pressure to become members of RPF or lose their jobs (Sundberg 2016). With respect to local governance, "[t]he main decision-making power lies with an administrative person [...] who is appointed by the central administration and thus not elected by the population" (Ansoms 2009, 307).

The contribution of this thesis to studies of the state in Rwanda is attention to the ways in which, even as the central government party controls these many aspects of what the state is, and even as local state representatives and their electorates have limited if any ways of pushing back against directives from the heads of RPF, they do have ways of adding other elements to the state's practices. State violence, in many of my empirical examples, intensifies exactly because of uncertainties and

holes in the public transcript, not because of an unyielding monolithic state set on reaching utopia. For example, in a state like the Rwandan, where it is difficult to question representatives of state authority, these representatives have ample opportunity to merge their own interests with state policies. This is reflected in (among other examples) widespread sexual abuse of women during civic education (Nzahabwanayo 2016), military personnel coopting land in the implementation of policies of redistribution (C. Newbury 2011), and in police officers offering to arrest people in return for payment (Rollason 2017). Reading these aspects of how state violence works in Rwanda, together with my own empirical material, I argue that the RPF state is more messy and less neat than how it is often described, and that our analytical approaches should reflect this. The analyses of this thesis engage the question: "what is the actual power of a 'strong' state?" (Purdeková 2015, 247). My answers focus on the power of the strong state to set in motion a multiplication of violence, which makes it unclear from the perspective of those subjected to it what the state is trying to achieve. A multiplication of violence, which simultaneously strengthens the state as it makes its violence omnipresent, and weakens the state as it makes its policies incoherent and randomly enforced.

The wholes, uncertainties and contradictions in the public transcript matter to the framing of political subjectivity. In my analysis, I depart from the Scottian emphasis of the subordinated as expressing their subtle resistance to a clearly defined dominant narrative. As I will expand on in this thesis, I question how clearly defined many of the dominant narratives are. Instead, the approach I take can be described using Jacques Lacan's metaphor of being camouflaged "against a mottled background, of becoming mottled" (cf. Bhabha 1984, 125). Becoming mottled may be understood as a framing of continuously shifting subjectivities. I use the term 'mottled background' to describe the uncertainties in Rwandan governance; the places where it is not clear what the state is trying to do. In this way, I analyze expressions of political subjectivity, framed by my respondents as a reaction to their sense of the impossibility of knowing what the state actually wants from them.

As stated above, the thesis does not explore political subjectivity in Rwanda as such, nor is it an account of all the aspects of state violence, let alone the RPF state which does more than carry out violence. My description and analyses of the phenomena engaged in this thesis are, I think, recognizable to those who experience them daily in Rwanda, but they are also very partial. They focus on particular aspects of the state in Rwanda and its violences, notably their contradictions and lack of coherence as well as specific responses to a sense of the state's inscrutability. I choose this framing, by arguing that in the case of Rwanda, this aspect of state violence is underexamined. That is, analyses of the work of the state in Rwanda often center on its high level of order and organization and pay little analytical attention to the plasticity, the changing character, of its violences.

The four articles

My characterization of politics of patience is unfolded over the course of four articles. Two of them emphasize a methodological argument and two of them emphasize a theoretical argument. Two of them pay most attention to the work of sovereignty and the state, and two pay most attention to political subjectivity. My motivation for having two methodological articles is that methodological challenges, doubts and insecurities are telling of the research context. By discussing how methodological challenges speak about the research context, I aim to state more than the fact that Rwanda is context hostile to free speech and therefore a difficult country to do research in. This argument has been made already (e.g. Ingelaere 2010a; Thomson, Ansoms, and Murison 2012; Reyntjens 2015b; Loyle 2016). Rather, I examine my senses of failure with a point of departure in the argument that "[f]ailure is symptomatic of a current order" (Werry and O'Gorman 2012, 106). In examining the ways in which I experienced failure during my fieldwork, I make a characterization of the order that came across in these experiences. Through this analysis, I investigate the effectiveness of the state, and the question of how the state actually operates as an active force in the social process.[13] To contextualize the analytical direction I draw out of my personal experiences of failure, and to thicken the description of this form of violence I use empirical material from sources other than my PhD fieldwork (e.g. my previous fieldwork, the fieldwork of others, historical sources, popular songs, paper-based and social media).

In so doing, I hope to make a number of contributions. By discussing sovereignty and subjectivity in Rwanda, I aim to add new perspectives to how these phenomena are understood in this specific context. Moreover, my exploration of the political subjectivity and agency expressed in compliance, acceptance and patience is intended as a theoretical contribution with wider impact. Following Lila Abu-Lughod, I argue that the social sciences have a tendency to look for and "romanticize resistance" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42). The thesis' arguments against this tendency are mainly framed in opposition to Scott's framework for understanding power and resistance, especially as it is used by Rwanda scholars. But Scott's emphasis on subtle resistance is popular outside of Rwanda too, as is the activity of identifying clever tactics of subordinated groups; interpreting silences, burps, and other bodily expressions as discreet resistance (e.g. Mbembe 1992; Johnson 1994; Certeau 1997; Girman 2004; Spade 2008; MacLure et al. 2010). As I beat on Scott a lot in this thesis, I am not trying to show the inherent unviability of his approach, nor to argue that the Rwanda scholars who use it "obscure the[…] actual motives" (Rollason 2018, 108) of their respondents.[14] Indeed, Scott's texts are full of nuanced and important characterizations of how people relate to power and

[13] Here, I am paraphrasing Sherry Ortner's account of anthropological symbolism (1984).

[14] This is the content of Will Rollason's recent critique of the popular use of Scott in Rwanda, but as I expand on at the end of chapter 2, I do not follow this line of thinking.

subjection. I moreover fully agree that many of, for example, Susan Thomson's respondents can be seen as enacting 'everyday resistance', not least because they at times explain their motivations by using almost the same wording as Scott (e.g. Thomson 2013, 112). The purpose of these beatings is to use Scott as a concrete example of tendencies in social analysis much more widely shared. Taking issue with Scott's approach is my entry point to show how our special attention to resistance works to "foreclose certain questions about the workings of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42). By examining compliance more closely, I explore these questions. I engage, for example, the tendency to look for strength and dignity in those subjected to violence and argue that this framing leaves out those who lose their strength and dignity. The analyses of this thesis moreover explore the meanings of acts of compliance in my field material, the agency expressed in these acts, and their political effects. In this way, this thesis mainly engages examples and literature from and about the Rwandan context. However, by going into empirical detail with this context, I aim to draw out lessons on sovereignty and subjectivity relevant for broader analytical discussions.

In the remainder of this chapter, I introduce the four articles and briefly describe the broader academic debates each of them is written into. I moreover explain how they relate to each other, and how each of them contributes to the overall arguments of the thesis.

Article 1: 'Winning life' and the discipline of death at Iwawa Island

Article 1's central focus is theoretical, and it is co-authored with Simon Turner. In it, we revisit my empirical material concerning Iwawa Island and read it together with Turner's research on civic education in Rwanda and my PhD research in order to discuss the role of the sovereign power of death within activities aimed at improving political subjects, such as rehabilitation at Iwawa. The approach of the paper is to examine the narratives of young men who have graduated from Iwawa rehabilitation and use their experiences of being subjected to sovereignty to analyze that power. The paper speaks to debates about what 'the camp' does – is it a place of discipline and ritual transformation or is it a place of abandonment where the interned are exposed to the power of death? We argue that in narratives about the rehabilitation experience, death plays a major role in discipline and the transformation desired by the state in the trainees. Iwawa's stated political purpose is transformation of young men addicted to drugs or alcohol or termed 'delinquent' in other ways. Death on Iwawa Island was explained in graduate narratives as something that occurs both from being abandoned on an island isolated from the rest of society – when trainees die of untreated diseases or starvation – and from the intensity of discipline – when trainees' bodies give out due to intense physical training requirements. In graduate narratives, death thus permeates discipline, since it gave the young men an experience of being forced to transform as death presented an ever-present alternative to 'winning life' by winning the course.

On my contribution to 'Winning life'

'Winning life' draws mainly on interviews I conducted between 2013-2014 as part of my research concerning the Iwawa rehabilitation program. In addition to conducting the interviews, I developed the conceptual framing together with Turner in ongoing discussions and write-throughs. We started by being curious about the notion of 'the course' as deadly and reviewed a range of theoretical framings to engage this notion by meeting and discussing them as well as sending drafts of the article back and forth. Some sections in the article reflect Turner's analytical preferences more than mine, and as the article was moreover accepted for publication at an earlier stage of my PhD studies, it departs in some places from the approach of the thesis' other chapters. I discuss how I reconcile these differences in chapter 2 in the section called 'Producing bodies'.

Article 1 builds up to article 2 by introducing the context in which "control means life or death". Where article 1 examined the power of death in the concrete enclosed space of the Iwawa rehabilitation centre, article 2 examines the more abstract destructive potential, and even power of death, attributed to emotions within and in the aftermath of the research interview. Article 1 moreover relates to article 4's argument concerning the experience of not being able to "hack it" in the military camp. That is, article 1 examines the many ways in which trainees on Iwawa Island felt exposed to death, even when they were doing well in the training and given special privileges on the island. Article 4 further unpacks how political subjectivity is expressed within such a context, where almost all activities and bodily comportments are punished.

Article 2: Conducting unleashing interviews where control means life or death

Article 2 is a critical methodological discussion of the role of empathetic engagement in research interviews taking place in violent settings. This paper is written into poststructuralist debates in qualitative methodology, which have argued for a "move away from fantasies of mutuality, shared experience, and touristic invitations to intimacy" (Lather 2000a, 19). The article argues for more critically informed conceptions of moral awareness in field encounters. Specifically, it calls for special caution with regards to emotional engagement in the field when the field is marked by violence. Drawing on my experiences of interviewees expressing ambivalence between relief of talking about sensitive issues in a context where opportunities to talk about them are few and a sense of threat of having exposed themselves by talking about these issues, I present two arguments. One is methodological, arguing that a researcher's empathetic engagement in violent settings can end up being experienced as threatening and intrusive by interviewees. I use these methodological reflections to contextualize a situation where a

respondent expressed romantic and sexual interest in me. My sexed and gendered identity in the field, I argue, was constituted not only by my embodied presence, but significantly by his desire to have me understand him and absolve him of guilt and a sense of threat in the aftermath of unleashing interviews. Critical moral awareness in such field encounters, I argue, requires continuous reflection about how to proceed, and how empathetic engagement may produce unexpected consequences in the aftermath of research interviews or other research encounters.

These changes during and after the interview situation inform my second argument, which is about political subjectivity. This argument takes its point of departure in the characterization given by my respondents of a survival tactic on Iwawa Island, which entails not letting themselves fully feel their emotional responses to the situation of, for example, anger, grief or fear. In this article, I term this maneuver subduing their sense of self. The research interview in this context became an opportunity for my respondents to claim their sense of self by controlling the narrative about their actions and the rehabilitation process. But claiming a sense of self, in a context where hiding from it is a prerequisite for survival, I propose, made them feel threatened and regret having made this bold move.

Article 3 continues the methodological move of using doubts, insecurities and a sense of failure as part of an argument about my research context. Where article 2 analyzed my insecurities in the research interview to speak to political subjectivity, article 3 analyzes my insecurities in trying to obtain my research permit and ultimately being deported to speak to an oft minimized aspect of how state violence works in Rwanda. Article 2 moreover builds up to article 4. It constituted my first attempts at grabbling with political subjectivity as expressed in acceptance, an analysis that I continue in article 4.

Article 3: Learning ethnographically from sexual harassment. Whose violence is it anyway?

Article 3 discusses the epistemology of learning ethnographically from sexual harassment and the conceptual lessons I draw out from my experiences with this form of state violence. It is written into methodological debates about the productive value of failure as well as the literature about how to read the state in Rwanda. The paper starts by discussing the literature on how autoethnographic experiences of failure can be brought to speak to broader social issues. I then use my own experiences of sexual harassment [15] and deportation to discuss and

[15] Being subjected to sexual harassment does not constitute a failure but is commonly characterized as being experienced in this way (Moreno 1995; Pollard 2009; I. Clark and Grant 2015; Johansson 2015; Kloß 2016; Caretta and Jokinen 2017), and this is how I experienced it too.

illustrate how singular experiences can be brought to speak to larger questions about the functioning of state power and violence.

The purpose of the analysis is to draw attention to all the forms of state violence in Rwanda, which are not related to the grand plans of the RPF, and to argue that it is often hard to tell whether the violence is part of a plan or part of the overspill. Analyzing incoherencies in my dealings with Rwandan government institutions and sexual harassment in my negotiations with a central government employed gatekeeper, whom I call 'Fred'[16], I argue that the image of a unified rule and a shared public transcript in Rwanda is misleading. Instead of focusing on the "positive and productive potential of uncertainty" (Cooper and Pratten 2015, 1), I emphasize the moments where uncertainty intensifies state violence. By discussing the questions: "Was the state trying to fuck me or was Fred? Did the state deny me access or did Fred?", and engaging other forms of empirical material, I illustrate the difficulty of identifying the state's surfaces. Of knowing when we are 'behind the scenes'. This difficulty motivates my argument in favor or stirring up the coding practices in our readings of the Rwandan state and including more mess in characterizations of what the state and its discourses are.

Article 3 leads to article 4 by giving political context to article 4's argument about political subjectivity. Where article 3 examines the incoherencies and appropriations of state violence, article 4 analyzes the political subjectivity expressed in acts of compliance in this context. Article 4, in this way, ties together threads from all 3 other articles.

Article 4: Politics of Patience. Acceptance, agency and compliance in Rwanda

The final article's arguments are mainly theoretical and analyze acts of compliance in Rwanda. It engages with a set of different situations, where I analyze the agency expressed in acceptance and patience. In this way, it is written into debates critical about the analytical emphasis on political subjectivity and agency expressed in resistance. I return to the expression of political subjectivity, which I termed 'subduing their sense of self' in article 2, and propose instead to analyze it by drawing on Seyla Benhabib's concept of 'narrative agency'. Narrative agency is a helpful concept for engaging characterizations of acceptance as a deliberately chosen state of mind and control of one's emotions in order to survive extreme conditions. Article 4 moreover analyzes patience as a response to a sense of being tested by "the authorities", be they family members, representatives of the local government, or police officers. Patience, in these situations, was framed by my respondents as the refusal to be tricked into making themselves arrestable and make their lives expendable by not doing their best to comply. Using characterizations of a political situation where the rules are unclear and every action may lead to

[16] All names of research participants in this thesis are pseudonyms.

punishment, I characterize 'the always wrong body' within and outside of Rwanda's sites of civic education. With this term, I want to take existing critiques (including that of article 1) of Rwanda's contemporary efforts at societal transformation further. That is, in addition to constituting an attempt at promoting a citizen ideal that discriminates and disenfranchises major parts of the population, my empirical material often reflects the impossibility of anyone making it to this ideal. In addition to the violence that serves the goal of disciplining and normalizing bodies, I emphasize the violence that is an end in itself. It is in this context of uncertainty about the best way to comply that I characterize a form of patience, which consists of tense openness and adaptability to often drastically changing demands and requirements from the authorities.

The politics of patience drawn up in these four articles are then the forms of sovereign violence that produce patient political subjectivities. They arise from practices of the state to which we can attribute meaning and intention, but importantly, they also arise from a mess of incoherent practices, wherein violence spills over and becomes destructive in ways unrelated to the stated goals of RPF. The methodological uncertainties, I emphasize throughout the thesis, relate to the difficulty of telling these two forms of violence apart.

The structure of the thesis

In order to build up to my four articles, two chapters follow this introduction. The upcoming chapter outlines and discusses my theoretical approach. Chapter 3 discusses my methods and methodology, by which I mean data collection techniques as well as the consideration of epistemological and ontological issues in the research process (Scwartz-Shea and Yanow 2002). These three chapters preceding the articles serve partly as the narrative thread that is missing in and between the individual articles because this form of thesis does not link its parts together as closely as what is the case in a monograph. They moreover discuss the relevant existing research and themes more thoroughly than what is possible within the limits of journal articles or book chapters. Finally, they represent a meta-reflection on the following material. The first two articles of the thesis were accepted for publication at an earlier stage of my PhD, and with my meta-reflections I motivate how these earlier takes on my subject can be related to the two last articles, which more clearly reflect the arguments I aim to make at this point in time.

2. Theorizing sovereignty and subjectivity

In the fall of 2014, I attended a public seminar about grid connection in Rwanda because it was of interest to me in my erstwhile employment. In preparation, I read the report made available by the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA) on the current rate of grid connection. According to the report, 13% of the population in Rwanda was connected to the electric grid, meaning they were accessing electricity produced by Rwanda Energy Group.

The seminar was attended by high profiles in the RPF party and government within the field of infrastructure. The Minister of State in Charge of Energy, former ministers turned private sector developers, the head of the national engineering association, and so on. Most of these high profiles gave presentations on grid connection. In the first presentation of the seminar, the presenter's slides showed that the grid connection was at 16%. Most of the participants in the seminar had had the chance to read the report saying 13%, but no one questioned where the new figure of 16% came from, or why the report had said 13%. Later in the afternoon, a presenter gave the figure 18%. From then on, that was the figure referred to in discussions during the coffee breaks. I did not hear anyone refer to any lower numbers. In the seminar's last presentation, the figure was 23%, and again, we all stopped referring to lower numbers and pretended that this had always been the number.[17]

It is hard to see any inherent benefit to the involved RPF members in making the number increase this drastically within the span of a few days. If a political decision had been made to say that the number was 23%, then the original report could have just used this number and so could the Power Point presentations. Moreover, electrification and other infrastructure projects are a significant venue for the RPF government to obtain funding from the EU and other big donors. This is an area where small numbers are not necessarily bad, since they can be used to argue for bigger donor support (Uvin 2002; Hayman 2011). In my reading of the situation, what made the number grow was uncertainty and fear that it would constitute a disrespect of the speaker and the whole political situation to venture into a discussion of what 'the real' number was.

Statistical figures in general are wrapped in extreme tensions within Rwandan politics. Statistics on ethnic differentiation has caused harms and violence from the

[17] According to the chart included in MININFRA's currently available report on grid connection from 2016, the figure during 2014 rose steadily from 20 towards 25 (MININFRA 2016, 2).

time of the colonial administrations continuing throughout the two first independent governments and significantly partook in motivating the genocide in 1994 (C. Newbury 1988; Des Forges 1999). Since the German and Belgian colonial administrations started conducting censuses, the percentages of the population termed hutu, tutsi or twa have been used politically to motivate systematic discrimination and ultimately the attempt to wipe out tutsi from existence in the country (Uvin 2002).

Statistics on the death tolls in the outbursts of violence taking place since 1959, the guerilla war in the early 1990s, the genocide in 1994, and the RPF's revenge missions during the late 1990s are similarly charged with tension. How many tutsi were killed in the violent uprisings of 1959? The numbers go from "tens of thousands" (C. C. Taylor 1999, 51) to "hundreds" (Carney 2014, 7). How many tutsi died in the government orchestrated genocide in 1994? The estimations go from 300,000 or less (Davenport and Stam 2009) to one million (cf. Rosoux and Mugabe 2017, 135), and the numbers themselves carry clear political loyalties with them. Critics of RPF have often merged critique of the regime with the claim that fewer tutsi than commonly reported died in the genocide (e.g. Lemarchand 2018). How many hutu were murdered by RPF on the way to seize government control in 1994, and how many have been killed in the subsequent years in revenge missions? Again the numbers vary drastically and continue to change.

Finally, statistics on Rwanda's development indicators since the early 2000s and continuing up until the present day are highly contentious. To a number of observers, these numbers appear to justify the well-documented use of excessive state violence by RPF. RPF is commended by development institutions and a number of social scientists because of its impressive numbers (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Crisafulli and Redmond 2014; Behuria 2015; L. Mann and Berry 2016; World Bank 2017). In response, observers critical of RPF have argued that the numbers are fake. That 'the real' statistical indicators on poverty reduction are way lower than reported by the government (Ingelaere 2010a; Reyntjens 2015c; Ansoms et al. 2017). Again, adherence to these different numbers demonstrate political allegiance.[18]

It is in this context of changing and charged numbers, that I read my mundane experience of seeing the number attributed to grid connection grow in a series of slide shows as "pregnant with meaning" (Fernandez 1986, 215). It serves, I argue, as an example of the uncertainty and lack of uniformity in the public transcript. It moreover illustrates the anxieties about the rules of the game of those commonly characterized as being in charge of that game, namely "the ruling classes" (Ansoms et al. 2017, 49). The fear of disrespecting the speaker and the number relates, I argue, to insecurities within RPF governance about what the "state-sanctioned

[18] This is not to relativize the numbers and conclude that either may be valid. Ansoms et al. (2017) make a compelling detailed characterization of their methods for obtaining data and problematizing the RPF indicators.

versions of reality" (Sundberg 2014, 61) are that day or on that topic. These insecurities are fed by what may be termed "the perpetual-motion mania of totalitarian movements, which can remain in power only so long as they keep moving and set everything around them in motion"" (Arendt 1958, 306). And these insecurities produce that very motion mania as they play a major part in the continuous changes in the state-sanctioned reality and rules of the game. In Hannah Arendt's analysis of the workings of totalitarianism in the Soviet Union, she argues that:

> the most perfect education in Marxism and Leninism was no guide whatsoever for political behavior – […] on the contrary, one could follow the party line only if one repeated each morning what Stalin had announced the night before (1958, 324).

A number of ethnographic studies have made compelling characterizations of the "governmentality" of the RPF state and how its "emphasis on liberal democratic principles of good governance parallel actual government designs with both socialist and colonial features – as well as neoliberal ones" (Sundberg 2016, 131; see also Pottier 2002; Straus and Waldorf 2011b; Huggins 2013; Purdeková 2015). Drawing on Arendt, this thesis argues that the most perfect education, in what we might call RPF's brand of 'Maoist Neoliberalism'[19], does not serve to secure political existence in Rwanda. By analyzing examples of public servants' insecurities about the public transcript, and the forms of coercive governance that arise in these insecurities, I emphasize the way violence multiplies through governance as negotiated. Whereas Scott distinguishes between the rigidity of the laws and the state in contrast to the "plasticity" (1998, 93) of pre-existing social life, this thesis elaborates on the plasticity of the state. By emphasizing plasticity in state making, I aim to draw attention to the precarious situation of everyone involved in and exposed to this form of uncertain governance in Rwanda.

Niklas Luhmann's characterization of the dizzying complexity of reality, where actors are overwhelmed by the sheer possibilities of a given circumstance, is relevant to this political situation of uncertainty. Luhmann proposes that trust serves the functional role of simplifying these complexities, making the world bearable and easier to navigate (1979). In the Rwandan context, which is marked by a "general attitude of mistrust" (Carey 2017, 8), relating to the country's history of violence and forms of governance (Bognitz 2018), I instead examine the work of patience in dealing with the "infinitely ramifying possible futures" (Carey 2017, 6)

[19] During its time as a guerilla army, RPF drew great inspiration from Maoist practices of revolution (Kinzer 2008), and has as a government taken inspiration from Mao Tse Tung's practice of governing through a dense representation of authority. In the phrasing of one of Andrea Purdeková's respondents: "The whole thing is copied from Mao […] In Tung's China, the idea was to have two thirds of people busy with different [government] responsibilities" (Purdeková 2015, 95–96). Simultaneously, RPF's economic policies are heavily inspired by neoliberal approaches to development, as reflected in the government's attempts to direct agricultural production towards the world market (Huggins 2013).

created by arbitrary exercises of sovereign violence.

In what follows, I discuss the theoretical approaches to sovereignty and subjectivity which frame my characterization of politics of patience. The upcoming section discusses conceptual framings of sovereign violence and the state. Following this section, I engage different theories on subjectivity, agency and the political meanings of patience.

Sovereignty and the state

The concept of sovereignty has historically been linked to the control over life and death. In this tradition, being sovereign means having the power to decide who lives and who dies (Hansen and Stepputat 2001). Thomas Hobbes' (2017) *Leviathan* is an oft-cited example of the idea that the sovereign and the population exchange protection for the monopoly on violence. Fearing the state of nature, which Hobbes characterizes as a state of violence of everyone against each other, the population subordinates to the sovereign and allows his violence as payment for his protection. This understanding of sovereignty resembles Max Weber's (2002) definition of the state as a political institution within a geographically defined territory, who guarantees social order through the use of threat or physical force (Månson 2015).

In contrast to these theoretical approaches, Michel Foucault describes a historical shift in the exercise of sovereign power. Before the 17th century, Foucault characterizes sovereign power as established through the king's right to kill. The end goal of this early expression of sovereignty was circular; the end of sovereignty is the exercise of sovereignty (2006). The 17th century, according to Foucault, marks the dawn of modern sovereignty, which is concerned with the investment of "life through and through" (1978, 139). With the emergence of new technologies to administrate and control bodies, such as modern medicine and modern approaches to discipline in schools and military camps, arose a new form of power concerned with the management of life. He terms this form of power "biopower" (ibid, 140). Instead of wielding, what he terms the 'ancient right' of the sovereign to take away life, regimes are now seeking to marginalize undesired versions of human life, in some cases to the brink of extinction (ibid). This is done in the name of "life necessity" (ibid, 137), that is, to help the majority of the population live healthy lives. The new locus of sovereignty, to Foucault, is the nation's population, for the sake of whom some forms of life need to be excluded or even slaughtered in the view of modern biopower (2003). In Achille Mbembe's framing: "In this case, sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not" (2003, 27, original emphasis). Article 1 discusses this approach to the sovereign power of death in an analysis of what Iwawa as a camp does. Iwawa can be read as an expression of modern biopower to the extent that it contains young men considered threatening to the health and security of the rest of Rwanda's society. Turner and I examine how the camp's work of subjection pushes them to the limits of and to actual death.

Drawing on Foucault's notion of sovereignty, Giorgio Agamben identifies the Holocaust as the ultimate example of biopower (2005). However, he rejects Foucault notion of sovereignty as an ancient form of power succeeded by modern biopower. Inspired by Walter Benjamin's critique of violence (to which I will return below), Agamben argues that biopower is the essence of all forms of power. From the earliest political systems to the present day, the sovereign state has had the ability to establish a "state of exception" (Agamben 1998, 9), and make some lives expendable, stripped of their political existence to a 'bare' state of life (Agamben 2005; Hansen and Stepputat 2005). When modern states are now taking biological life as their primary target, they are, according to Agamben, exposing the originary bond between sovereign power and bare life (Agamben 1998; Oksala 2010).

Foucault and Agamben, however, share an understanding of how sovereignty works within modern politics. The sovereign power of death, according to both, is yielded *in the name of* security and/or the national population's health. I emphasize '*in the name of*' because this is where my analyses depart from these takes on sovereignty. While article 1 emphasizes sovereignty as violence designed to reach a desired end, article 3 and 4 analyzes examples of sovereign violence with no clear ends. Here George Bataille's characterization of sovereignty is useful. What characterizes sovereignty, to Bataille, is the "negation of the principle of utility" (1985, 148). Unlike Foucault's and Agamben's modern sovereigns, who refer to a security problem in order to expose people to death, Bataille's sovereign is sovereign exactly by not needing a reference point for his power. What Bataille's insight offers to my analyses is a take on transgression for the sake of transgression. This form of transgression is reflected in, for example, sexually abusive or harassing relations of state representatives to those subjected to their power. While these practices serve to produce and re-produce a certain relation to the state, they can hardly be framed as transgressions '*in the name of*'. This form of violence can be related to Arendt's perspective on politics, which I draw on in this thesis to frame the forms of state violence that spill over.

Predating Foucault and Agamben, Arendt too identified the merging of the categories of life and politics as the central question of modernity (1970). She contrasts modern politics with the political practices of ancient Greece. Back then, she argues, the sphere of politics, *polis*, did not concern itself with the biological necessities of life, which were restricted to the private sphere of the household, *oikos*. The distinctive trait of *oikos* was that it was ruled by necessity. As necessity ruled, violence was an inescapable part of this sphere. The *polis*, on the contrary, was the sphere of freedom uncontaminated by the logic of necessity. Political decisions, according to Arendt, need to be reached by deliberation, and the force of necessity therefore has no place in this sphere (Arendt 1998, 27; Oksala 2010). She characterizes the escalation of violence in modernity as the consequence of the entry of life necessity into the sphere of politics. That is, the violence that concerns survival comes to dominate the sphere of the political in different forms. In contrast

to other theorists, who characterize violence as the ultimate kind of power (e.g. Fanon 2008), the distinction between the two is essential to Arendt. Power, according to her, can be understood as the determined action of a group, which relies on language. Violence is always only a means to reach an end and lacks direction and meaning (Arendt 1970). Violence, to Arendt, can therefore not be truly political because to be political is to be free from the violent logics of necessity.

The approach to sovereignty of this thesis draws on tenets from especially Foucault and Arendt. With Foucault, I stress the productive power of sovereign violence and depart form Arendt's characterization of it as apolitical (and in general from her distinctions between *polis* and *oikos*). Drawing on Arendt, however, I want to open up for discussions about the purposelessness of state violence. Its lack of direction, multiplication, and the aspects of its application which produce different forms of life than the ones characterized with Foucault's emphasis on regulation and regimentation. The meanings of sovereign violence are explored through the narratives of my respondents. In article 1, Turner and I contrast the meanings of violence on Iwawa by analyzing two differing statements. One graduate from Iwawa describes beatings there as comparable to how you beat a snake. You beat a snake to kill it, not to improve it. This experience relates to Arendt's take on violence as destructive and not productive. Another graduate describes fearing death on Iwawa because the trainers are so set on making sure that the trainees do not return to their former ways, they beat them too hard. In this interpretation, violence is there to improve lives of trainees on the island, but it is so intense he feared it would kill him. The aim of the thesis is to juggle these differing perspectives on how sovereign violence works in Rwanda. While acknowledging that it is possible to decipher order from contradictory practices, I question whether this is always the best working interpretation and argue that there are important aspects about sovereignty that are best understood by focusing on disorder.

Tentative and emerging sovereignty

The thesis' arguments thus engage a range of different theoretical perspectives on the state, but is especially indebted to "Foucault's attempt to cut off the King's head in the social sciences (Foucault 1980) and to develop a nonessentialist ontology of power beyond notions of origins and centers or the continuity of cultural forms" (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 296). That is, I examine sovereignty beyond the head of state and the central government and direct my attention to the practices of the state in order to speak to how sovereign violence works through concrete social relations. In the words of Thomas Hansen and Finn Stepputat, sovereignty may be framed as "a tentative and always emergent form of authority grounded in violence that is performed and designed to generate loyalty, fear, and legitimacy from the neighborhood to the summit of the state" (2006, 297). This framing stands in

contrast to a Hobbesian perspective on sovereignty, where it serves as an ontological ground for power and order expressed in the law.

Analyses of sovereignty through multiplicities are well-developed in studies of the state in the postcolonial world and especially on the African continent (Mbembe 1992, 2001; Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005). Works in this tradition have analyzed how local, national and global actors make and remake the state "through processes of negotiation, contestation and bricolage" (Hagmann and Péclard 2010, 539; see also Risse, Borzel, and Draude 2018). Through these processes, it is argued, they form "informal hybrid governance arrangements" (Menkhaus 2014, 154; see also Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006; Herdt and Olivier de Sardan 2015). These arrangements have in many accounts been described as a response to weak, illegitimate or collapsing state structures. When the state is "retreating" (Strange 1996, 75), "crumbling" (Meagher 2007, 414), or "fail[ing]" (Reno 1999, 16), so the argument goes, it leaves room for alternative expressions of authority to exercise sovereignty.

Because of its far-reaching state infrastructure, Rwanda is often presented as an exception on the African continent (Roessler 2005; Campioni and Noack 2012; Purdeková 2015; Sundberg 2016). Many states in Africa face the question of "how to broadcast power over sparsely settled lands" (Herbst 2000, 3), but this question is not pertinent in Rwanda. The state in Rwanda (as opposed to, for example, the state in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)), reaches all corners of the country's small and densely populated territory (an estimated 12,2 million on 26,338 km^2 (UN 2017, 20)). Representatives of RPF rule every level of local governance. After the local governance reform of 2005, the country is now officially structured into 4 provinces, 30 districts, 416 sectors, 2146 cells and 14,876 villages (Purdeková 2015, 90). Informal Community Policing Committees and Neighborhood Watch programs, both overseen by RPF representatives, moreover, make the state's reach cover very small administrative units (ibid). These practices furthermore blur "the boundaries between the realms of politics and administration" (Sundberg 2016, 81) as RPF dominates both government, parliament and the country's many administrative offices.[20]

Whereas other ethnographies of governance in Africa have characterized how religious, traditional and other authorities appropriate and negotiate the state (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006; Herdt and Olivier de Sardan 2015), scholars of Rwanda have made the reverse argument. Civil society organizations, private companies, churches and traditional authorities (such as the informal mediators of small interpersonal conflicts called *abanzi*) have been described as coopted by the RPF state (Gready 2010; Longman 2011; Adamczyk 2012; Stys 2012; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Grant 2015a; Bognitz 2018).

[20] The smallest administrative unit prior to the local governance reform, *Nyumba Kumi*, meaning 10 houses, has also been reported to function in practice even after its official termination (Ingelaere 2014; Purdeková 2015).

This situation can be read as lending itself to a Scottian analysis of the state as a product of the elite; "a political structure assembled atop a [...] community" (Scott 2017, 184). Especially Scott's arguments from *Seeing Like a State* (1998) have inspired analyses of the RPF state in Rwanda (e.g. Straus and Waldorf 2011a; Huggins 2013). The RPF state is in these ethnographies characterized as ruled by an elite which shares the four tenets that have caused humanitarian disasters in many other parts of the world. These are, intense administration of nature and society by the state, a near religious faith in science and its ability to improve every aspect of existence, a willingness to use excessive force to effect large-scale interventions, and a weakened or non-existing civil society with limited capacity to resist these interventions (Scott 1998, 4–5).

Scott's insights are highly useful for analyzing many aspects of how the state works in Rwanda and elsewhere. However, as argued above, I take issue with the many binaries included in Scott's argumentation, and with his neat and coherent portrayal of both the elite and the state. As also argued by Timothy Mitchell, Scott draws up a too sharp distinction between 'the powerful' and 'the powerless' (Mitchell 1990, 547). This tendency is repeated in many studies of power in Rwanda. These refer to, for example, "center and periphery" (Ingelaere 2010a, 41), "the RPF regime" and "ordinary folks" (Thomson 2013, 11), "the elite" and "the citizenry" (Purdeková, Reyntjens, and Wilén 2018, 2), the government's "vision" versus "alternative views" (Reyntjens 2016, 74; see also Jessee 2017), "top-down" (Ansoms 2011, 244; Straus and Waldorf 2011a, 4), and the government's "public transcript" versus the population's "hidden transcripts" (T. P. Williams 2016, 339). Scott's distinction between the public and the hidden transcript, as I will show, moreover does not capture the ongoing changes in the transcripts of the powerful but presents them as fixed and monolithic (see also Gledhill 2012).

But if we refuse this form of binary distinction between the powerful and the powerless, how can we account for the overwhelming sense of experiencing a population subjected to the almost omnipresent control of the central government when we study Rwanda? A related question directed at Foucauldian approaches to sovereignty and the state reads:

> If power is dispersed throughout society, in institutions, disciplines, and rituals of self-making, how do we, for instance, [...] understand popular mythologies of power, corruption, secrecy, and evil as emanating from certain centers, people, or hidden domains? (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 296).

In dealing with this question, I draw on Philip Abrams' (1988) notes on the difficulty of studying the state. Abrams rejects the understanding of the state an entity in itself and proposes instead to study the "state-idea" (ibid, 79). The state-idea, to Abrams, is an ideological construct that obfuscates the actual disunity of the "state-system" (ibid). By acting in the name of the state, institutions such as the police, schools, and prisons take on the appearance of a unified whole, from which they draw legitimacy and political authority. Mitchell has further developed

Abrams's idea by arguing that the defining characteristic of the modern nation-state is its "structural effect" (1999, 89). The state's structural effect refers to the way in which everyday practices of state institutions and authorities cause them to appear as more than the sum of their parts (Sundberg 2016).

Part of what produces the structural effect of the state is the anticipation and imagination of those subjected to its rule. Jacques Derrida's reading of Kafka's parable *Before the law* (Kafka 2015) is pertinent here. In Kafka's story, the citizen comes to see the law, sits and waits for it outside its doors and attributes a certain power to it. In Derrida's reading, the anticipation of an authoritative disclosure of meaning constitutes the very means by which that authority is enforced (Derrida 1987). Judith Butler phrases the argument as the claim that "the anticipation conjures its object" (2006, xv; see also Aretxaga 2000).

In article 1, Turner and I analyze the narratives of Iwawa graduates about the meaning they attribute to the continuing threat of death on the island. The state's structural effect is produced in the way its subjects engage with its actions. While we cannot speculate about whether deaths are part of the government's actual intentions, the many accounts of deaths on the island make it seem like they are a cost the government is willing to incur. Thus, the authoritative disclosure of meaning is enacted through the message produced with the lives that are treated as expendable. Many deaths and injuries on Iwawa are caused by a multiplicity of often random factors, which are not planned by a central government. For example, anger from a military commander on the island over a trainee stealing tomatoes from his garden, were in my interviews described as having motivated the beating of this trainee to permanent disability. As the story was presented in several unrelated interviews, it was only because the other military commanders intervened that he did not kill the man. While it is hard to see how disability should form part of a central government's plan for transformation, we can understand this form of violence as a demonstration that serves to show that trainees should in no way disrespect representatives of the state. That is, it serves to build a certain relationship to the state of unwavering deference. In this way, we can read meaning into the violence. I highlight this incident, however, because my respondents emphasized the way the commander was *carried away* by his anger. Being carried away and having to be stopped by other commanders, is, I argue, an example of how violence multiplies beyond the state's utility, and how authorities at the local level do exact their own influence on what the state becomes.

Another way in which my respondents have attributed meaning and intention, to what at first glance looks like incoherent violence, is by referencing what might be termed "the shadow state" (Verhoeven 2012, 273). The shadow state is a concept Harry Verhoeven uses to characterize the political forces working 'behind the scenes' in Rwanda. It fits well within a Scottian reading of public transcripts that "mask" (Scott 1990, 3) the actual oppressive violence of domination. As I will show in article 3 and 4, my respondents have interpreted seemingly disordered violence as part of the secret plans of the RPF state to, for example, maximize the number

of hutu placed under arrest. Again, the production of the state's structural effects is in the meaning making of its subjects. Responding to Hansen and Stepputat's question about why power is experienced as stemming from certain centers (in Rwanda from President Paul Kagame and the central RPF government), it is because of the structural effects of what is often arbitrarily exercised sovereign violence (see also Belcher and Martin 2013).

Representing and transgressing the law

In my conceptual approach to arbitrarily exercised sovereign violence, I take inspiration from Deborah Poole's ethnography of *gamonales* at the highland frontiers in Peru. She characterizes the *gamonales* as simultaneously helping, representing and abusing their subjects, and in this way, representing the state and the law as well as the transgression of the law (2004). Thus, they may be said to embody the two sides of state making: the law and the violence on which it rests. In Benjamin's framework, they employ both the "lawmaking" and the "law-preserving" violence (1986, 284). Military violence is an example of lawmaking violence, as it involves the making of new laws. A military coup, for example produces a new political order, and with it, new laws. Law-preserving violence, according to Benjamin, does not only cover the violence applied to preserve legal ends, such as the prevention of murder. Rather, it is essentially about preserving the law itself: "violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law" (ibid, 281). The police officer to Benjamin, marks the merging of these two forms of violence. Police violence, though law-preserving can "for security reasons" (ibid, 287) intervene where no legal conflict exists. In this way, the police institute new laws through its practices. Through police violence, the state reaffirms itself: its laws are manifestations of violence for the sake of the law.

Ethnographies attending to how these phenomena play out in the mundane, have characterized the everyday lives, practices, and interactions of social actors situated somewhere along the continuum of the state and the citizenry (Herzfeld 1993; Hagberg 2005; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Sundberg 2016). In his ethnography of bureaucracy in Malawi, Gerhard Anders characterizes local civil servants as having the qualities of "chameleons" (2009, 122). He portrays how the different conceptual and legal landscapes that frame the work of a senior civil servant, allow him to strategically exploit different normative codes in order to live up to expectations and still extract profit for himself (ibid). By studying the mundane, these ethnographies highlight the intricacies of people's everyday practices in search of respect, wealth, or power through their relation to the state (Sundberg 2016).

The contribution of this thesis to ethnographies of the state is thus not that it is the first to identify how sovereignty is enacted through a multiplicity of actors who all affect the form of its violence. What I contribute is an analysis of this aspect in the context of Rwanda, where it has received way less attention. As mentioned

above, ethnographies about the state in Rwanda pay due attention to the transgressions of state-society boundaries. However, these transgressions center almost exclusively on the state's cooptation of its subjects and rarely on the forms of cooptation enacted by Ander's bureaucrats (Stys 2012; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Adamczyk 2012; Ansoms and Cioffo 2016). Indeed, Sundberg presents her characterization of the blurred boundaries of the state in contrast to ethnographies like Anders', arguing that the state seems to set the terms for the local practices of negotiation, "problematizing the agency of so-called brokers" (Sundberg 2016, 13). While I agree with Sundberg and many others that 'brokers' and other forms of local authority have little to no way to push back against the political initiatives as they are decreed from a central government, they do have ways to add their own agenda to these initiatives. Related to this analysis, we may note that as Benjamin too references security reasons as the motivation for transgression, there are many acts of sovereign violence not included in his framework. In contrast to Benjamin's police officers, who act to protect the state's monopoly on violence, Mbembe characterizes state representatives in the postcolonies as:

> an undisciplined army of dishonest police, informers, identity-card inspectors, gendarmes, men in khaki, impoverished soldiery, [who] coerce common people blatantly and seize what they have no right to seize. They practice raw violence. Strictly speaking, it is no longer a question of forcing bodies to be docile or maintaining order. […] Instead, it is simply the administration of a summary, barren violence for purposes of appropriation and extortion (1992, 21).

As mentioned above, Rwanda has often been presented as an exception when it comes to postcolonial governance. In contrast to Mbembe's freely rampaging soldiers and policemen, Rwanda's state representatives have been characterized as being under the tight control of the RPF state (e.g. Baker 2007b). The Rwandan state in general has been portrayed as "a political system relatively free of rent extraction" (T. P. Williams 2019, 4). However, ethnographies of the state at work in Rwanda are full of examples of raw violence, appropriation and extortion (see for example C. Newbury 2011; Huggins 2013; Rollason 2017).

Tying these threads together, the thesis examines different forms of sovereign violence in Rwanda with some analyses taking a Foucauldian approach and some leaning more towards an Arendtian approach. From a Foucauldian perspective, representatives of sovereignty in Rwanda represent and transgress the law as part of the state's agenda, which often relates to 'security reasons'. Purdeková, for example, relays a civic education lesson, wherein a lecturer from the Ministry of Defence seems to deliberately provoke a sense of transgression by openly mocking god, the bible and Christianity. By thereby "instilling a particular relation to the state in the population" (Purdeková 2015, 241), this lesson can be understood as part of the state's project of molding a particular form of subject. In addition to this form of transgression that play into the state's utility, this thesis uses Arendt to

analyze the spillover effects of a state that everywhere transgresses. Because the state is imposing, extractive and often demeaning to those subjected to its rule (ibid), it can be hard to tell the state's agenda apart from the personal agendas of its representatives when they extract and demean. Sexual harassment in my field experiences, and sexual abuse in Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo's research on civic education (2016) and in Tim Williams et al.'s research on primary and secondary education (T. P. Williams, Binagwaho, and Betancourt 2012) serve as examples of how there is room in Rwandan governance for local authorities to merge their agendas with that of the state.

Closed contexts

While the thesis focuses on the violent transgressions of the state in Rwanda, I have found it unhelpful to place it within some of the binaries championed in political science between states termed 'liberal' and others which might be referred to as 'illiberal', 'authoritarian', 'nondemocratic', 'coercive' or even 'exceptions' within a dominantly 'liberal' system (see for example Huntington 1993; Linz 2000; Ottaway 2003). The reason I depart from such approaches is that they tend to imply an essentialist understanding of what constitutes 'real' or 'full-fledged' democracy (Zakaria 1997), which does not take into account the coercive practices and 'states of exception' within states termed 'liberal' or 'democratic' (Agamben 2005). Rwanda has within this theoretical tradition been termed, for example, 'a hybrid regime' (Loyle 2016), 'developmental authoritarianism' (Matfess 2015), and an 'autocracy' (Marriage 2016, 46).

Insights from these studies are often highly useful and meaningful, but ultimately I find them complicit in producing a narrative about violence in Rwanda, which obscures the historical and contemporary role of 'liberal' states, development institutions and agendas in this violence (Des Forges 2011; Uvin 1998; Beswick 2011). In a country where donors contribute an estimated 40%[21] to the national budget (Jessee 2017, 12), and where its majorly invasive policies, such as forced mono-cropping, have clear practical and ideological ties to Western neo-liberal institutions and approaches to development (Pottier 2002; Musahara and Huggins 2005; Huggins 2014), it is absurd for liberal observers to consider Rwanda an aberration. In the case of mono-cropping, the policy is motivated by the desire for Rwandan agriculture to direct its investments towards the world market. With respect to arrests and imprisonments of members of the political opposition, journalists, or RPF politicians considered problematic, their arrests are often motivated by corruption charges (HRW 2017). This fight against corruption is one of the major reasons why Rwanda is a called a "donor darling" (Hagmann and Reyntjens 2016, 5), and explicitly used to motivate increases in funding (DFID 2013; World Bank 2017). Rwanda's many forms of mandatory community service

[21] 50%, according to Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (2011, 12)

and gatherings, which are described as exhausting to the limited resources of the majority of the population (Uwimbabazi 2012), are moreover framed in terms of "good governance" (Sundberg 2016, 53), a term that attracts funding and support from Western liberal development institutions (Chakravarty 2016a). How development is measured within neo-liberal ideologies, what counts as growth and what is considered 'unfortunate implementation' (Ferguson 1994), all form part of reinforcing and legitimizing sovereign violence in Rwanda in concrete monetary as well as ideological terms. Rwanda, I argue, is not opposed to liberal rule. State violence in Rwanda is enmeshed in neo-liberal agendas, and as such, it is one version of how liberal rule takes place in the current world order.

Thus, instead of terming Rwanda illiberal (or use similar concepts), I use Nathalie Koch's concept 'closed context'. In motivating the concept, she and her co-contributors argue:

> rather than trying to define (and thus materialise) a definitive regime of government over a delimited space, we instead adopt the term 'closed contexts' as a means to focus on the nature of closure and coercion itself, and to allow for the variety of scales and places at which these practices unfold (Koch 2013, 390).

In this way, my objective is to study forms of sovereign violence, as I have encountered them in my field work and in other material about Rwanda, as opposed to characterizing Rwanda as a particular kind of regime.

Grey areas

For all my resistance to their framing, ethnographies dedicated to the study of authoritarianism speak well to the forms of sovereign violence, this thesis analyzes. This is especially the case with their emphasis on the grey areas of sovereignty:

> In authoritarian circumstances, it is never quite so clear what you can and cannot do. There are laws, many laws, but they are not consistently applied, they contradict each other, and executive behavior without legal sanction is also a possibility. This results in a sense of uncertainty: you never know whether you are crossing a red line or not (Glasius et al. 2017, 9).

In a similar vein, Sundberg characterizes the dense network of intelligence representatives, such as the Neighborhood Watch, as having caused the state to appear paranoid and unpredictable, capable of using force even "against those seeking its protection" (2016, 259). The state's intense pursuit of dangerous elements makes it difficult to decipher and keep track of the various sources of potential threat, a situation in line with Michael Taussig's notion of "terror's decentredness" (1992, 48).

As argued by Marlies Glasius et al., the insecurity cuts both ways (2017). People within the regime suffer from uncertainty about the level of popular legitimacy and

robustness of their regime, even in circumstances that would generally be considered stable (see also Schedler 2013). Rwanda's massive state surveillance infrastructure constitutes a *de facto* exercise of great sovereign power (Purdeková 2011a, 2016; Sundberg 2016). At the same time, from an Arendtian perspective, it may be seen as an example of powerlessness. Recalling her distinction between power as the concerted action of a group and violence as the "substitute" (Arendt 1970, 184) used when the powerful feel control slipping from their hands, the intense efforts put into surveillance may be read as the powerlessness of a state that is certain its population has secrets which it can never quite get at (Grant 2015b). In this context, the notoriously manipulated statistics about the Rwandan population (Ingelaere 2010a; Ansoms et al. 2017) become a double-edged sword. While they may work to bolster RPF's sense of progress and international reputation, they also make its population opaque and unknown.

Moreover, the distinction between people on the ins and outs of the regime is often very blurry. 'Ordinary citizens' serve a number of roles in governance in Rwanda (Ingelaere 2014; Sundberg 2016; Purdeková 2016), and thus they take part in exercising sovereign violence. Reversely, some of the most powerful politicians, generals and business men within the RPF regime have suddenly found themselves ousted, imprisoned, and even killed (Verhoeven 2012; York and Rever 2014; Gardner 2017). This aspect of sovereignty in Rwanda can be fruitfully analyzed by using Arendt's insights about totalitarianism and violence.

> Nothing is more characteristic of the totalitarian movements in general and the quality of fame of their leaders in particular than the startling swiftness with which they are forgotten and the startling swiftness with which they can be replaced (1958, 305).

The quote comes from her analysis of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. But it is also relevant for both the history of governance in Rwanda and its current political situation. The genocide in 1994 was prepared by the government led by President Habyarimana. Yet, less than a day after his plane crash and resulting death, killings began under a new leadership (Des Forges 1999; Straus 2008). Like Kagame is today, Habyarimana was attributed great autocratic powers (Desrosiers 2014). But in a matter of hours after his death, government orchestrated killing patrols were in place together with road blocks and the public administration of weapons (Des Forges 1999). Using Foucault's metaphor, it was possible to 'cut off the king's head' and see sovereign violence unfold as if undisturbed by the lack of a sovereign leader.

In today's Rwanda, the government-controlled media is outraged every time prominent RPF members are accused of war crimes during the 1990s wars in Rwanda and DRC. When Lieutenant Colonel Rose Kabuye was arrested in Frankfurt in 2008 (accused of shooting down the plane in which Habyarimana died on behalf of RPF), *New Times* (an English languaged newspaper representing RPF views) brought articles calling her "a woman of substance" (Tumwebaze 2008) and

traced her impressive career as RPF unit leader in 1994, mayor of Kigali, and Chief of State Protocol. Moreover, local authorities organized major protests demanding her release (Purdeková 2015, 37). Radio proclamations equaled the arrest to Rwanda as a country being under attack, and several musicians made songs honoring *Roza Wacu*, our Rose (ibid, 148). Through lobbying from Kagame, among others, the accusations were dropped, and she returned to Rwanda in 2009. In August 2014, her husband and RPF veteran, David Kabuye was arrested by Rwandan authorities, and she was in the same period removed from her position as Chief of Protocol. Her husband has since been convicted for possession of an illegal firearm and for defamation of the President. Rose Kabuye herself is rumored to be living in *de facto* house arrest, as she reportedly is no longer allowed to hold a passport, and her movements are said to be closely monitored (Kamo 2014; Great Lakes Voice 2015; Gakwerere 2018).

New Times, KT Press, The Independent, and other conveyors of RPF news continue to demonstrate their temporary loyalty and support for RPF soldiers turned politicians when they are attacked from abroad. In 2015, General Emmanuel Karenzi Karake, Rwanda's head of internal security, was arrested in the UK (accused of war crimes and genocide in the 1990s). In addition to fervored media support (e.g. Kayumba 2015), his arrest led to collections of donations to pay his UK £1 million bail from the population during Rwanda's mandatory public meetings organized in local sectors (Purdeková 2016, 79). He too was able to return to Rwanda later in 2015 but was arrested by Rwandan authorities in August 2018. He has yet to be officially accused of a crime and is rumored to be undergoing interrogations in a 'safe house' in Kigali (Kamo 2018; Okello 2018).

Examples of the expendability of high ranking RPF politicians are numerous[22] (see also Verhoeven 2012). On the level of local government, mayors, heads of districts, sectors, cells and villages as well as military- and police officers are similarly precariously seated. They are regularly fired, resign under pressure, and even arrested and imprisoned over corruption charges, failure to meet development goals, and accusations of sexual misconduct (New Times 2011, 2012; Ingelaere 2014; Kwibuka 2016). When *only* 11 out of 30 outgoing mayors had been forced to leave their post during their five year terms in 2016, the Ministry of Local Government called it "the most stable of all terms" (Kwibuka 2016). Taking the

[22] To mention a few examples: David Kabuye was arrested together with former General Frank Rusagara, who played a major part in the production of history material in RPF's education activities. He was convicted of defamation of the President in 2015 (Rwirahira 2016). Karake was arrested at the same time as the Managing Director of Kigali Heights, Dennis Karera, also an RPF veteran (Kamo 2018). In April 2018, the longest serving minister in the RPF government, James Musoni was removed from his post with reference to allegations of having an affair with a married woman (Newz.ug 2018). In 2012, Colonel Dan Munyuza, serving as the head of External Security Services, Brigadier General Richard Rutatina, who was in charge of military intelligence, Brigadier General Wilson Gumisiriza and Lieutenant General Fred Ibingira were all arrested "under investigation for acts of Indiscipline with respect to getting involved in civilian business dealings in Democratic republic of Congo" (chimpreports.com 2018).

precarious and blurred distinction between having and not having power in Rwanda into account, I propose that an analysis of "radical, routinized uncertainty" (Cooper and Pratten 2015, 1) offers a productive conceptual apparatus to describe sovereignty and subjectivity in Rwanda.

In addition to a great overturn in personnel, RPF produces routinized uncertainty through its motion mania. Rwanda has a number of large-scale plans for the country's improvement, including the Vision 2020, which intends to rapidly transform Rwanda from a low-income agrarian economy to a knowledge-based middle-income society by the year 2020 (Republic of Rwanda 2000). In 2016, Vision 2050 was introduced, aiming to make Rwanda a high income economy by 2050 (Gatete 2016). Through a mix of grand plans, like the visions, and *ad hoc* drastic decisions, such as the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion's sudden decision in 2014 that the process of closing down orphanages had to be completed within a year (Al Jazeera 2016), Rwanda's politicians, bureaucrats and population are always in a rush.

Part of the "transformative rush" (Purdeková 2015, 24) relates to RPF's explicitly stated objectives. With references to the tiger leaps of growth in certain Asian economies, Rwandan politicians and government employees encourage their subjects to "*kwihutisha amajyambere*" (Purdeková 2012, 203), rush the move forward/ rush development. One example of rushed development in practice is the *imidugudu* policy, which has aimed at resettling the entire rural population into small and intensely administrated villages, and which did forcefully resettle most of the population in the southeast and northeast in the years 1996-1999 (C. Newbury 2011, 231). Catharine Newbury describes how "inadequate planning and confusion about directives from the central government had led to incoherent policy regarding villagization at the local level" (ibid, 233). Another part of the motion mania, then, may be read as relating to uncertainty and anxiety among those who implement half-thought-out policies which are continuously changing. The RPF does not only follow the one plan for moving forward initiated in 2000. New plans, new policies and new laws are continuously introduced (see for example, RGB 2018; Rwanda Water Portal 2018; Kwibuka 2018). In a context of many possibilities of punishment, the different forms of authority enacting unclear and rapidly shifting RPF political initiatives, illustrate Taussig's simple observation: "Fear rules not only those who are ruled, but The rulers too" (1992, 3). In his ethnographic discussions of Benjamin's work on violence, he states:

> there was no System. Just a Nervous System, far more dangerous, illusions of order congealed by fear – an updated version of what the poet Brecht had written in the 1930s, obsessed with ordered disorder, the exception *and* the rule. "Hard to explain, even if it is the custom, Hard to understand, even if it is the rule" (ibid, 2).

Following Abrams, Butler and others, this thesis departs from Taussig's reading and contends that the illusion of order is still order. What I take from Taussig's account of 'the nervous system' is his emphasis on disorder within order. And as I will

expand on in chapter 3, I use the quote from Brecht as a methodological motivation for emphasizing uncertainty; the rules are hard to understand.

Being unsure about the rules relates to where we locate the surfaces of the state. The notion of a 'shadow state', working behind the scenes of the official state, is one way to analytically reconcile the examples of incoherent governance in Rwanda. Within this view, one form of violence belongs in the front office, the surface, and another in the back, what lies behind the surface. With article 3, however, I question how we locate this 'behind'. When are we in the front office? Does the work of the state end when lessons are over during civic education and trainers sexually abuse the women attending this education? Or is the abuse part of encountering the state and thus its surface? In answering these questions, I draw on Sara Ahmed's work on the constitution of surfaces. In her elaborations on 'skin' as the surface that both contains individuals and communities, she argues that skin, and boundaries in general, are felt in the moment that others impress upon them. In other words, skin is not simply already there but comes into being through encounters (2005). She describes how borders that demarcate inside and outside affect the very distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' in the first place, in a "maintenance-through-transgression" (ibid, 102). Using this lens, we may see the transgressive practices of the state and its representatives as continuously making and remaking the surfaces or boundaries of the state. Transgressions, such as sexual abuse, land appropriation and bribes do not take place in an already defined political space behind the scenes. They work to define and redefine what that space is. In a context of uncertainty about what the official state's agenda is today or on this issue, transgressors have room to play with the uncertainty about what belongs in the front office and what belongs in the back. The surfaces of the Rwandan state are not simply already there, and therefore, I argue, it is hard to know when we are behind or underneath them.

On violence

Grey areas in the enactment of sovereignty affect how violence works in Rwanda. Violence does not only come from a government that "bears down on a population" (Rollason 2017, 59). Living in uncertainty and a sense of ubiquitous threat affects how people relate to each other (de Lame 2004; Sundberg 2016). In article 4, I analyze the prevalence of poisoning in Rwanda with a view to understanding complicity in the state's 'overreach' (Ingelaere 2014) into the lives of its citizens. As argued by Bruce Lawrence and Aisha Karim "violence is always and everywhere a process. As process, violence is cumulative and boundless. It always spills over. It creates and recreates new norms of collective self-understanding" (2007, 12). The historical violence in Rwanda and the contemporary state violence, in this view, affect how much 'ordinary Rwandans' trust each other and the violences that take place inside families and other intimate relations. Poisonings and suspected poisonings are prevalent forms of violence in many communities in Rwanda

(Buckley-Zistel 2006; Chakravarty 2016a). Uncertainty is thus produced not only through the state's violences but through the lurking sense of unknown threat from intimate others as well. In this context, the state as an actor that is attributed near-magical seeing powers becomes a real or imagined resource, also for people who have numerous reasons to mistrust and resent the state. In other words, the state as represented by, for example, military and police intelligence officers, is actively invited to be a part of the intimate lives of many Rwandans. As the state is attributed the ability to see what is hidden, this seeing power in my research was also used by one of my respondents to determine whether his stepmother might be trying to poison him. Ethnographies that present especially the rural population as clearly opposed to the central government, ignore the many actions taken by 'ordinary Rwandans' to invite the state's representatives to play a part in their intimate lives.

Centering my analysis on aspects of state violence, which express a blurry distinction between the state and citizens, the rulers and the ruled, I pay special attention to these spillover effects. Even though many examples of coercive governance in Rwanda are initiated by what may be termed "elites" (Ansoms et al. 2017, 50) in Kigali, these violences multiply and accumulate in their processes of implementation. The people involved in implementation almost always represent RPF and report to the central government. But, I argue, there is analytical value in paying attention to the many factors that still work to enact what the policy becomes. Too neat characterizations of the state as an actor atop a community that enforces its ideas top-down, ignore important aspects of how state violence works.

Producing bodies: the camp and everyday encounters with the state

In analyzing the work of the state in and among bodies in Rwanda, I draw on Foucault's ontology of power. Taking a poststructuralist approach to embodied existence, I analyze how the state's engagement with bodies produces them in a certain way. This analysis does not proceed from a claim that bodies are physically created by the state and did not exist prior to encounters with it. The starting point is a departure from classic liberal theories about the individual's relation to power more generally. John Locke, Jeremy Bentham and others write about subjection from the perspective of pre-existing individual on whom power "presses [...] from the outside" (Butler 1997, 2; Carver and Chambers 2008). In contrast to this approach, Foucault argues that "We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects" (1980, 97). In this way, power is framed, not as something external to us, but as something on which our very existence depends. As such power produces bodies and produces subjects. I will go into detail with the implications this perspective has on agency in the following section.

Foucault makes his arguments in the course of his analysis of the historical development of institutions charged with disciplining bodies, notably the prison, the military camp, and the school. Techniques of training and controlling the body in service of social authority have existed throughout recorded history (Mauss

1973). What interests Foucault is what he terms the modern transition to disciplinary power:

> The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely (1995, 138).

In Foucault's genealogies, he traces how disciplining mechanisms work in a variety of institutions, and how these dispersed webs of power work to produce the subject. In the prison, the prisoner is not merely controlled by the exterior of prison walls. Instead, "the individual is formed or, rather, formulated through his discursively constituted 'identity' as prisoner" (Butler 1997, 84). In Butler's work on subjection, she argues that it "designates a certain kind of restriction *in* production, a restriction without which the production of the subject cannot take place, a restriction through which that production takes place." (ibid). The restriction in production, in Butler's framework, takes place through "the repeated stylization of the body" (2006, 45).

The notion of bodies being produced through a repeated stylization is useful for my analysis of encamped life at Iwawa and in everyday encounters with the state in Rwanda. In the context of the camp, Turner and I examine the role of death in disciplining activities at Iwawa Island in article 1. Through military exercises, the involved authorities at Iwawa are attempting a subject transformation, where young men considered to be in the grips of their immediate needs are brought towards the disciplined "habits of soldiers" and a willingness to give Rwanda their all. In existing research on encamped education in Rwanda, the object of analysis has often been the type of body the state attempts to produce. Purdekova's study of *Ingando* traces the Rwandan state's attempt to produce "perfect development subjects" (Purdeková 2015, 32). Molly Sundberg's ethnography of *Itorero* characterizes the state's attempt to produce "model citizens" (Sundberg 2016, 2). Other researchers have described the Rwandan education camps attempts at producing "good citizens" (S. Turner 2014, 415) and "good citizenship as attachment to the state [and] to the Rwandan community and its values" (Nzahabwanayo 2016, 164). Turner and I continue this analytical direction in article 1, where our analysis concerns the form of subject Iwawa attempts to produce. That is, we relate Iwawa to the overall political project of the RPF for transforming its citizenry. While I follow the argument that we can trace such a logic from Rwanda's practices of civic education, other parts of the analysis depart from Foucault's focus on discipline and regimentation and attend to the unpredictability of both the camp and other encounters with the state. In doing so, I want to take the critique of existing research on encamped education in Rwanda further. As mentioned earlier, article 1 was accepted for publication at an earlier stage of my PhD. In it, we use Purdeková's concept 'perfect development subjects', and argue that the state's attempts to produce them at Iwawa bring the already disenfranchised to the verge

of and to actual death. With the thesis' later articles, I turn my attention to the impossibility of anyone, disenfranchised or not, reaching this form of secure subject position. Whereas Foucauldian approaches to the production of bodies tend to focus on routine and regimentation, article 3 and 4 analyze the unpredictability of how many of the state's encounters with bodies will turn out.

To give an introductory example of unpredictable everyday encounters with the state, I will here engage the explanations young men have given me of how to interact with police officers on the street. These descriptions took place, while I was walking with young men on the streets of Kigali, walking to and from interview places, walking to and from public offices, and so on. Young men encountering street police officers are highly alert and sensitive to the possible drastic turns the situation can take. Especially at night, when the officers are likely to be drunk and more likely to consider approaching men threatening, the encounter requires careful navigation. When I have made mistakes in my encounters with street officers, and when the topic of handling police officers came up in other research situations, young men have explained to me how one handles one's body in these situations. Don't walk too close or they may think you are threatening, don't walk too far away or they may think you are trying to escape, don't stare straight into their eyes, or they may think you rude, don't avert their gaze or they may think you are hiding something. These police encounters thus work as a repeated stylization of bodies – they make them tense and ready for a variety of different outcomes, which are impossible to know in advance.

Rollason describes a similar attitude of openness towards police officers, though less tense, among his respondents who are motodrivers in Kigali.

> They tend to regard it as impossible to drive a motorcycle without having any mistakes—there are just too many laws and regulations one has to abide by, too many papers and certificates one has to keep in one's possession. For them, the world of their livelihood presents itself as a complexity in which perfection is an unattainable ideal. To live therefore requires the cultivation of relations of 'patience' or 'forbearance' (*kwihangana*) […] This might entail […] 'knowing how to talk to people', being entertaining or respectful as appropriate (Rollason 2018, 103).

In both these examples, each encounter with authority has a unique set of rules. The repeated stylization of the body does not consist of going through a routinized set of motions but of stylizing the body into alert vigilance. The emphasis is on reading the situation and the police officer in order to estimate whether to look directly at them or away, whether to be 'entertaining' or 'respectful'. There is, in these situations, no 'public transcript' to look to for guidance because any response has the possibility to be framed as an offense. Even if the moto drivers described by Rollason were to have all their papers in order, my field experiences are full of examples of punishment based on police officers' estimation that the offender

lacked 'respect'.[23]

With my emphasis on the changing and incoherent rules guiding encounters with the state, article 4 characterizes 'the always wrong body', the body that is always open to punishment, however it strives to comply. This part of my analysis differ from ethnographies which draw on Foucault to understand the "governmentality" (Sundberg 2016, 22) of the RPF, or the underlying logic that permeates different expressions of an RPF project (Purdeková 2015, 11). Drawing on descriptions of not being able to "hack it" (Eisenhart 1975, 13), not seeing a way to perform ones subjectivity in an acceptable way, I want to highlight an aspect of how bodies are produced in Rwandan education camps (and military training camps more broadly), which has received less attention.

My emphasis on incoherence and unpredictability stems partly from my empirical subject matter. There is perhaps more incoherence in the practices and descriptions of Iwawa than what is the case in other forms of encamped education in Rwanda, such as *Ingando* and *Itorero*. *Ingando*, in English translated as "'solidarity camps', 'reeducation camps', 'civic education tamps', 'political awareness camps', 'reorientation camps' or 'reintegration courses'" (Purdeková 2015, 176), consisted of short term civic education targeting different groups (for example, public servants, sex workers and *genocidaires*). *Itorero* denotes both a three-week long program targeting secondary school graduates and a range of different civic education activities aimed at sensitizing the population to the government's development agenda (Nzahabwanayo 2016; Sundberg 2016). *Ingando* and *Itorero* both have official publicly available documents stating what their aims are (Sundberg 2016; Nzahabwanayo 2016; Purdeková 2015). In practice, encamped education under *Itorero* and *Ingando* may differ from the objectives stated in these documents, but it makes sense to talk about an official description of a desired subject transformation.

Iwawa has no official publicly available document stating its mission, and the website on the Ministry of Youth and ICT describing the rehabilitation centre was recently taken down. During my first research concerning Iwawa, some high-ranking government employees described it as a place exclusively for young men suffering from addiction to drugs and alcohol, guaranteeing that there was extensive psychological examination involved in the process of sending young men to the island. Other involved ministries described it as a place for all kinds of delinquents, and had no problem stating that street vendors were sent there too. On my tour of the island, the guide asked a group of trainees how many had been addicted to drugs

[23] The same point is made by Sipa (1990) whose letter to the Prefect of Douala, Mbembe quotes: "if your car's papers are in order, your tail lights and indicators work all right and your headlights too, your spare tyre is correctly inflated, your extinguisher is brand-new, the first-aid kit is overflowing and even the shopping basket in the back doesn't contain anything subversive . . . they must nonetheless nail you with a charge. It's no problem having to choose between 'obstructing the highway' and 'parking on the pavement'" (cf. Mbembe 1992, 22).

or alcohol before coming to Iwawa and took no issue with me seeing less than half of the men in the group raising their hand. There is no coherent public transcript describing what Iwawa is supposed to be. Everyone involved has an idea about what foreign researchers are not supposed to hear about – suicides, murders, deathly starvation – but to present a unified message about what Iwawa is, is more complicated. There is no official agreement among the authorities involved what exactly 'delinquent' youth refers to, and when there is no such agreement, the change that is desired is also somewhat unclear. One possible explanation for why Iwawa appears to be a place of more randomness than other forms of education in Rwanda, is that it targets people who are not considered in need of much justification, such as homeless men, who appear to make up the majority of its trainees.

In this way, a parallel may be drawn to Carina Tertsakian's study of the prisons run by RPF in Rwanda. She describes a historical process, where the prisons in Rwanda in the 1990s were run by soldiers, who would beat visitors and prisoners alike (Tertsakian 2008). Later, the police took over and implemented a more clearly defined structure with more clearly defined tasks and rules about who was to be beaten for what offences. Some of the graduates I interviewed from Iwawa would similarly describe a lot of uncertainty about how to perform well within Iwawa military training, and a sense that being beaten was unavoidable. In my interviews and conversations with officials connected to the Iwawa rehabilitation centre, they too would express frustration with the lack of organization of punishments. One person, in the process of evaluating the program, told me that "every teacher [at Iwawa] you ask says that he can beat the students. This creates a lot of disorder, and this needs to change".

The process of change in prison management described by Tertsakian can be read as one of Foucault's examples of the gradual transition away from the random demonstration of sovereignty, where the role of punishment was to demonstrate the sovereign's uncontested power, to regimes of regimentation and discipline, where punishment is meant to serve the public good (Foucault 1995). It may be that Iwawa has undergone or is undergoing similar changes, since several involved authorities expressed wishes for more clearly defined punishment structures in my 2013-2014 research. But while a more clearly defined structure of punishments might make Iwawa a space of more regimentation and less random violence, random violence and incoherence feature in many spaces of governance in Rwanda. As such, this form of violence constitutes an important aspect of how sovereignty works in practice, as well as what kind of bodies are produced in these spaces. This argument recalls Hansen and Stepputat's contention that:

> Sovereign power exists in modern states alongside, and intertwined with, bio-political rationalities aiming at reproducing lives and societies as an ever-present possibility of losing one's citizenship and rights and becoming reduced to a purely biological form (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 304).

Although I suggested above that a possible explanation for randomness in punishment on Iwawa could be the class of people sent to the island, this explanation does not quite fit. Iwawa also hosts young men from upper class families, and young men who had gone to study in Europe and were called home to Rwanda because their families feared that they were losing their ways due to drugs. Rumors about Iwawa in Rwanda refer to the place alternately as a "VIP place", where the elite send their drug addicted sons, a place for opposition politicians, and a place for street children.

Having drawn up my approaches to sovereignty and state violence, the following section discusses my approach to political subjectivity – how people relate to power and authority, as well as how dynamics of power shape how we experience the world.

Subjectivity, agency and patience

Proceeding from a poststructuralist approach to subjectivity, this section discusses how agency and patience can be conceptualized in this framework. Poststructuralism poses what Foucault calls the paradox of subjectivation; we become self-conscious agents through the very processes that secure our subordination (1980). That is, our abilities to act in the world are developed within the 'restriction in production' (Butler 1997) constituted by the way power works within individuals. From this perspective, the abilities that define our modes of agency "do not represent the residue of an undominated self that existed prior to the operations of power – they are themselves the products of those operations" (Mahmood 2011, 17). Whereas much of the scholarship in the tradition of liberalism and feminism have treated norms as an external social imposition that constrain the individual, Butler argues for a reconceptualization of this external-internal opposition. Instead, she proposes that "an irresolvable ambiguity arises when one attempts to distinguish [...], between the power that forms the subject and the subject's 'own' power" (Butler 1997, 15). There is no way, se argues, for the subject to enact her agency independent of existing power structures.

Subtle resisters

It is by drawing on poststructuralist approaches to subjectivity and agency that I problematize Scott's framework for understanding domination and the arts of resistance as well as his concept 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 2000). Scott's point of departure is that the subordinated groups have an authentic "voice" (Scott 1990, 136), which they share in the hidden transcripts. In other words, Scott subscribes to the classic liberal idea of an original uncontaminated subject, who, when appearing to support the preconditions for his subordination, is simply "laying it on thick" (Scott 1990, 70). Scott's arguments are part of what may be termed "New

Left scholarship" (Mahmood 2011, 6), a body of work that sought to restore agency in subordinated groups, especially the peasantry. The project took form as a response to certain Marxist formulations of power and revolution that had assigned the peasantry a non-place in the making of modern history (see for example Hobsbawm and Thorner 1980; Thompson 2013). Within this ontology, Scott uses the metaphor of 'masking' the realities of power, and argues that "the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask" (Scott 1990, 3). A similar portrayal of masking practices is made by Lisa Wedeen (1999) in her ethnography of Syrian political culture. In her study of the cult around President Assad in prerevolutionary Syria, she asserts that both those in power and the general population use masking practices. The regime masks its domination in political rhetoric, and while the dominated are "fluent" in this rhetoric, they do not believe it, but are merely acting "as if" (Wedeen 1999, 40, 69).

The subordinated groups within Scott's and Wedeen's frameworks thus have an independent existence despite being dominated. To Scott, it is this expression of authenticity that form the basis of their resistance (Scott 1998, 311–16). Scott's work read as though he considers resistance to be more authentic and true than power. This tendency comes across in his use of the metaphors of theatre and acting to explain his understanding of official power versus unofficial resistance. In Rollason's reading:

> public discourse is 'onstage', in costumes and makeup, whereas resistant talk happens 'backstage', without props and unrehearsed (Theodossopoulos 2014). Certainly, the way in which subsequent anthropologists make use of Scott suggests that the assumption is that where we can 'discover' resistance, we are getting at 'the truth' (Rollason 2018, 100).

Related to this understanding of the backstage as marked by unrehearsed spontaneity, Scott contrasts the rigidity of the official domain with the plasticity of social life (Scott 1998). In this context, his emphasis is on the subtle ways in which those subjected to power, manipulate and maneuver within the unyielding conditions of oppression. Other examples of social analysis of subtle political resistance tend to share this emphasis on the cunning of those subjected to power. For example, Mbembe analyzes how the Togolese Party acronym 'RPT' was manipulated "[u]nder cover" and made to resemble the "'sound of faecal matter dropping into a septic tank' or 'the sound of a fart emitted by quivering buttocks' which 'can only smell disgusting'" (Mbembe 1992, 6). Michel de Certeau makes a comparable conceptualization of "tactics" as the "art of the weak" (Certeau 1997, 37). Tactics are framed as the opposing response to the 'strategies' of the powerful. Strategies are developed over longer courses of time, draw on scientific reasoning and often a wealth of other resources. Tactics in contrast, are developed in the situation and thus consist of clever maneuvers.

> Dwelling, moving about, speaking, reading, shopping, and cooking are activities that

> seem to correspond to the characteristics of tactical ruses and surprises: clever tricks of the "weak" within the order established by the "strong", an art of putting one over on the adversary on his own turf (Certeau 1997, 40).

Practices of, especially peasant, but also other groups, subtly playing with expressions of political dissent are objects that receive great scholarly attention in Rwanda (see for example de Lame 2004; Thomson 2013; Ingelaere 2014; Breed 2015; Purdeková 2016; Ansoms and Cioffo 2016; Berry 2017). In contrast to the above characterizations of subtle dissent, article 4 emphasizes the cunning attributed to those in power, as it was described in my research encounters. That is, I focus on the forms of political subjectivity that respond, not to the scientifically based orderly plan of the powerful, but to a sense that everything the authorities say may be a lie or may change tomorrow. In other words, article 4 as well as article 3 emphasize the plasticity of the state.

To summarize the way in which I depart from analyses of subtle resisters, I use a quote from Homi Bhabha's characterization of 'mimicry' as practiced by both colonizers and colonized. Bhabha argues against the masking perspective that "[m]imicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask" (1984, 129). But if there is, as argued in these poststructuralist and postcolonial literatures, no authentic voice, no original subject, where are then the avenues for subversion of power?

Openness in agency

With Foucault's analysis of the productive aspects of power, he argues that power does not mainly work negatively, by denying, restricting or repressing, but also positively by producing forms of subjectivity (Abu-Lughod 1990). In this context, he claims that "[w]here there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 1978, 95). Resistance, according to Foucault, does not take place in a space uncontaminated by power. Resistance nevertheless can take a number of forms, which he terms "counter-conducts" (2007b, 75). He argues in favor of this term over terms like 'revolt', 'disobedience', 'insubordination' and 'dissidence'(2007a, 200), as these practices do not concern the will not to be governed at all (Death 2010). Counter-conducts, he argues, represents "the will not to be governed thusly, like that, by these people, at this price" (Foucault 2007b, 75).

Abu-Lughod uses Foucault's point of departure to discuss Awlad 'Ali Bedouin women's practices of resistance in Egypt. Against what she terms analytical tendencies to romanticize resistance and "to read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power" (1990, 42), she argues that resistance can be used as a "diagnostics of power" (ibid). In this way, she analyzes the practices of Bedouin women that go against traditional authorities with a view to identify signs of changing relations in the different systems in which they are enmeshed, "as they become increasingly incorporated into the Egyptian state and economy" (Abu-

Lughod 1990, 41).

Butler too analyzes agency as an enactment that always takes place within systems of power. But because she locates the exercise of power in the repeated enactments, or iterations, of bodies, these bodies again affect the stability of social norms (Butler 2006). In other words, agency is expressed in the openness of each iteration of social norms. When subjects reenact social norms, they have the ability to reappropriate or resignify them (Butler 2004, 1997, 2011; Mahmood 2011). In this way, while Butler repeatedly insists that all acts of subversion are a product of the power structures they oppose, her analyses of agency tend to privilege the phenomena which "open possibilities for resignifying the terms of violation against their violating aims" (Butler 1993, 122), and to argue that "agency may well consist in opposing and transforming the social terms by which it is spawned" (Butler 1997, 29; Mahmood 2011, 21).

In Saba Mahmood's ethnography of agency in Egyptian women's piety movement, she follows Butler's conceptual approach to agency but problematizes Butler's and more general tendencies in social analysis to center on agency in subversion of power. Her analysis stresses that "agentival capacity is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms" (Mahmood 2011, 15). Following Mahmood, it is this aspect of agency I pay most attention to in my analyses. While I take great inspiration from Mahmood, her project differs from that of this thesis in her subject matter. Her focus is on practices of self-realization through piety among Muslim women in Egypt. As such, she discusses her respondents' characterizations and practices of choosing a moral objective and cultivating the mode of being they desire. In contrast, the situations of patience, acceptance, and compliance I examine, are all reactions to a situation where my respondents describe a sense of having little to no control over the situation. Where Mahmood describes women taking control over themselves and framing their actions as deliberate choices, my analysis centers on the agency of bearing with what you have not chosen. Bearing with and being patient with one's situation is the meaning of the Kinyarwanda verb *kwihangana*, which I will examine in the upcoming section.

Patience and personhood

A different line of critique directed at traditional concepts of agency comes from Soran Reader. Reader's project concerns the Western philosophical tradition of defining personhood in terms of agency, which is defined in opposition to patience. In answering the question, 'what does it mean to be a person?', classic Western philosophy has commonly replied, to have agency. She argues:

> The agential bias is not limited to philosophers. It is a vast invisible structure which pervades our culture. It says: when I am an agent, I am, I count. But when I am passive, incapable, constrained, dependent, I am less a person, I count less (Reader 2007, 580).

Reader's argument is written into discussions in analytical philosophy, which commonly distinguish between 'agents' and 'patients'. Patience in this tradition is both etymologically and conceptually linked to the notion of being a patient. This tradition follows Aristotle's distinction in ancient Greek between *pathos* – experience, suffering, misfortune or calamity – and *ergon* understood as consisting of 'actuality', which he argued was etymologically linked to action (Aristotle 2016, IX, 1050a20; Reader 2007, 582). Politics of Patience would in this analytical tradition mean something like the politics of suffering, but this is not this thesis' framework.

Kwihangana, to be patient, to bear with, to endure, in Kinyarwanda is a verb, and the nouns for patience *ukwihangana* and *ubwihangane* are based on it. The Kinyarwanda word for the English noun 'patient' is *umurwayi*, which literally means 'sick person', so unlike what is the case in English, patience and patients are not etymologically linked in Kinyarwanda. Unlike *pathos*, the main function of *kwihangana* is not to express the idea of being passively exposed to something. It is centrally about actively bearing with something, being patient with something, in other words engaging with something in a certain way. As a mode of being, *kwihangana* becomes relevant when there is suffering. It is, however, not constituted by suffering. Other words in Kinyarwanda express the idea of suffering without adding the element of what you do with the situation, such as *kubabara*, to suffer, to be in need, to be hurt, and *kugorwa*, to be unfortunate, to be exposed to trouble. Because being patient is about bearing with something, it is about having a certain form of strength. In a conversation, where I was trying to explain the meaning of the adjective 'strong' in English,[24] I translated it as *kugira imbaraga*, to have strength. To this my conversation partner added "*mmm, kwihangana*", while nodding, to confirm that she now understood the sense of it.

Because of its important role in Kinyarwanda, the concept *kwihangana* has been translated to English in quite a few different ways. Kinyarwanda.net and Arthur Hands' guide to Kinyarwanda both translate it as 'to be patient' and 'to endure' (Hands 2013, 389; kinyarwanda.net, n.d.). In Maggie Zraly's study of resilience among genocide rape survivors, she translates it as 'to withstand' 'to be strong' and even 'to not cause a conflict' (2008, 219). Jennie Burnet's ethnography of the lives of women in the aftermath of genocide similarly adds an extra element of meaning to the noun *ubwihangane*, which she translates as patience, forbearance *and* concealment of suffering (2012, 227). Pamela Scorza et al. relate the concept to being 'calm' and 'good-hearted' (Scorza et al. 2017, 868), and Will Rollason, on a similar note, argues that it entails a 'forgiving' attitude (2018, 102).

In my analyses, I follow the standard dictionary translations of *kwihangana* and its related nouns. My argument is that while concealment of suffering and the

[24] A word that does not have a corresponding adjective in Kinyarwanda, which relies more on verbs and nouns and has only 15 words that act like adjectives in the Germanic sense.

encouragement not to cause conflict may often go together with *kwihangana*, it seems misplaced to add it to the meaning of a word which is used to express comfort and support. The expression of sympathy when others are in need is "*wihangane*" (singular) – be patient. *Wihangane* is translated to English as "sorry", in the sense of "I am sorry for your situation". It is common in Kinyarwanda to use conjugations of *kwihangana* to express sympathy with the suffering of others, where sympathy is shown implicitly through the encouragement to endure and patient.[25] There is a relevant difference between saying "*wihangane*" and the message often given to crying children "*kurira bibi*", crying is bad, or simply "*ceceka*", be quiet, which I take as more literal encouragements to conceal suffering. *Wihangane*, in contrast, implies taking the suffering seriously as something to be worked upon.

The expressions of *kwihangana* I analyze in this thesis differ not only from the classic understanding of patience in analytical philosophy, but also from other more recent characterizations of "politics of patience" (Appadurai 2001, 28). Arjun Appadurai describes politics of patience as slow and deliberate practices in the context of housing crises in Mumbai and other major cities. Within Appadurai's politics of patience, people transform their needs into a collective claim and patiently work to organize themselves over the long term in order to confront and solve this claim (ibid). On a similar note, Valeria Procupez characterizes politics of patience in Buenos Aires' temporary housing communities as "waiting while working to make something happen" (Procupez 2015, S63). As summarized by Manpreet Janeja and Andreas Bandak: "Patience here is a political stance that involves a shift in perspective from the immediate to the longterm" (2018, 8).

In contrast to this perspective on the temporality of patience, the examples of patience I analyze are mostly acutely attuned to the present. This is especially the case with the patient acceptance, I analyze in article 2 and 4, which centers on the notion that survival of extreme conditions requires acceptance of those exact conditions. Living out temporal alternatives, such as feeling regret about the injustice that caused you to go to Iwawa, is in this perspective likely to weaken you and make you less capable of surviving. As opposed to Appadurai's and others' understandings of politics of patience as mobilization into subversive action, my emphasis is here on the role of patience in practices of complying and enduring.

Conceptualizing patience as a way of engaging with suffering need not be specific to the Rwandan context. Indeed, some analytic philosophers have problematized maintaining a distinction between agency and patiency at all (e.g. Martin 1997;

[25] Related to this feature of Kinyarwanda is that the language does not have words that express the idea of apologizing without adding a plea for forgiveness. The RPF's politically orchestrated reconciliation strategies have been criticized for including letters to victims from perpetrators, wherein they beg for forgiveness without apologizing (Brudholm and Rosoux 2009). This critique is relevant, as the letters (and confessions in general) commonly defer guilt to others (Thomson 2013), but in the ordinary use of "*mbabarira*", forgive me, the expression implies an acknowledgement of guilt, and communicating the intention of apologizing cannot be done without adding a plea for leniency.

Kittay 2005). In Reader's critique of agential bias, she argues that all acts of agency contain aspects of patiency, of suffering something beyond your control. She illustrates how there are no examples of agency without suffering: "When I act, in that action itself, I the agent suffer. When I hit you, I suffer your resistance to the blow. […] When I hit you, you suffer, and your suffering essentially partly constitutes my action." (Reader 2007, 588). However, she insists on maintaining a distinction between agency and patiency, arguing that there are many situations, where all that can be done is to *endure*. But this is where I argue that enduring too is a way of engaging with suffering. It is not the expression of the passivity Reader takes it to be.

Reader's critique is gendered, and she argues that the philosophical bias in favor of action ignores the social work done by women who endure hardships. She uses Veena Das' ethnography of Indian women enduring extreme violences, losing their homeland, abduction, sexual violence, forced marriages, and then reverse abduction to 'restore' the nation from which they had been 'stolen' (Das 2007). These women described their endurance of these hardships by using metaphors like "drinking" or "digesting this poison" (Das 2007, 43, 221). Drinking and digesting are actions. They may be actions that respond to suffering over which a person has no control, but they still constitute an active engagement with this situation. This, I argue, is reflected in Reader's own analysis:

> digesting the poison' suggests metabolising, neutralising, containing or living with the violence, so that human life can continue, or even begin again when it has been utterly laid waste. In enduring, when women as victims 'digest the poison', they contain and process the terrible facts, to make the world safely livable for themselves, their families, their children, their communities, and even perpetrators themselves (Reader 2007, 598).

Burnet's ethnography of the lives of women in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, and Zraly's specific focus on genocide rape survivors, share Das' focus on female bodies that contain and process societal violence, expressed in the quote "genocide lives in us" (Burnet 2012, 10). By having genocide live in them, they describe a maneuver of containing it and stopping its reverberating effects in society. In article 4, I examine a comparable phenomenon, where my respondents describe an approach to emotions as having potentially powerful and destructive effects in both the subject and society. Being patient, in this framing, is a processing of violence that attempts to control its effects. It is an active engagement with violence, and thus an expression of agency, even though this engagement may not necessarily be performed in active opposition to violence.

Suffering and action

While I therefore disagree with Reader's conceptual approach to endurance, as suffering without action, I do agree that suffering without action deserves analytical

attention. Death is an example of such suffering, and critiques of the analytical move, from terming those subjected to violence 'victims' to terming them 'survivors', have highlighted this problem (Nissim-Sabat 2011; Schott 2015). When our analytical frameworks only include those who are still alive, we are unwittingly carrying out symbolic violence against those who died as well as their memories. Survivor discourse emphasizes strength and the capacity to overcome the violence directed at you, as if it is unworthy to be thoroughly affected by violence (Alcoff and Gray 1993).

Part of what drives this thesis is my worry that analytical emphasis on lives of dignity and subtle resistance leaves important parts of the story out. Some analyses of lives lived in horrible and deeply unjust conditions follow a script that seemingly has to end in a high note. The weak "are not truly weak" (Thomson 2011b, 445; see also Janeway 1981; Certeau 1997; Scott 2000) and these people are "not just victims" (cf. Schott 2015, 178). While I see the importance of analyzing alternative forms of strength and acknowledging alternative forms of resistance, it seems as though implicit in these analytical frameworks is a request for our research subjects to be strong for us as researchers and readers because it is hard to bear their suffering. This approach is problematic because it shares some of the logic that motivates RPF to make shoe wearing mandatory in public and fine those who cannot afford them (Ingelaere 2014). That is, it contains a refusal to acknowledge something ugly and an attempt to gloss over it in a way, I argue, that is often harmful to those subjected to polishing.

When people describe themselves as "walking dead" (Thomson 2013, 146) and as "weakened" (Thomson 2013, 147), are we taking them seriously when our analyses focus on all the ways they show strength? Death and the specter of death looms largely in my field material, as reflected in article 1, 2 and 4. Where do those who die fit into a narrative of people who are not just victims but strong in their own way? Agamben uses his characterization of the *Muselmann*, a mode of being inside Nazi concentration camps also described as "walking dead" (Agamben 1999, 42), to argue against ethics based on human dignity. We cannot base ethics on our shared dignity as humans, he argues, as humans can lose their dignity. Drawing on this perspective, I argue that our analytical frameworks need to be capable of including those who lose their dignity, and those who lose their lives. If we are always looking for "dignity" (Thomson 2013, 130) or "dignified life" (Grant 2015b, 24; Løndorf 2017, 180), there are important aspects of how power and violence work which we then choose to ignore.

This critique is inspired by Patti Lather's research concerning women living with AIDS (Lather and Smithies 1997). She writes about her framing that readers might expect an intention to "honor those struggling with and against this disease" (Lather 2000a, 23). However, she refuses these forms of representation, terming them a form of meaning making "that recuperate and appropriate the tragedies of others into consumption, a too-easy, too-familiar eating of the other" (ibid). Following Lather, I argue that the emphasis on subtle resisters is too comforting for the

researcher and the reader. It is too pleasant to end academic texts by illustrating that the subjected also have their clever ways of pushing back. This is not to say, that practices of overt and covert resistance are not present in Rwanda. They certainly are (see for example de Lame 2004; Pells 2011; Thomson 2013; Shearer 2015; Sundaram 2015; Purdeková 2016). But our analytical tendencies to highlight them and end our representations with examples of what Abu-Lughod calls "the resilience and creativity of the human spirit" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42), makes, I argue, the violence we are studying a little too easy to swallow.

Recent critiques of the popularity of Scott's framework within Rwanda scholarship have gone in the other direction and tended to argue that Scott's conception of resistance is not strong enough. That it opens up for conceptualizing almost everything as a political act (Palmer 2014; Grant 2015b; Hahirwa, Orjuela, and Vinthagen 2017; Rollason 2017). Against these critics, I would tend to agree with e.g. Susan Thomson that actions taken to survive (for example through disobeying mono-cropping policies) in a political context that threatens to take your life can meaningfully be conceptualized as a political act of resistance (Thomson 2013). Especially Nicola Palmer's argument against Thomson reads an example of the hierarchical ranking of subject performance this thesis criticizes. Palmer introduces her argument by criticizing the notion that hanging laundry can be seen as an expression of resistance and proceeds to give an example of what "active resistance" (2014, 232) looks like. Her example is a life history interview with an older man of hutu ethnicity, who resisted multiple pressures to participate in crimes against and killings of tutsis in the years leading up to and during the 1994 genocide. What motivated his resistance was his strong moral convictions. There is something redeeming about this form of agency. In a political environment where even murder has come to be seen as self-evident, the courage to stand by one's moral convictions is impressive. Moreover, the drama of bravery is itself alluring. Palmer describes a scenario, where a whole village wanted to slaughter a cow belonging to a tutsi family, and her respondent alone tried to stopped the slaughter, which must have taken an extraordinary amount of courage (ibid, 239). [26] However, I still do not follow Palmer's advocacy for ranking this type of action higher than other forms of political action. For example, many reports tell of lives saved during the genocide by begging and pleading. In a number of situations, tutsi mothers saved the lives of their children and/or themselves, not by standing as unmovable pillars of moral principle, but by throwing themselves at the feet of *genocidaires* without caring about their dignity (Des Forges 1999, 166). Other forms of undignified action were performed by hutu women with tutsi husbands, who claimed that their children were illegitimate and went out of their way to be officially registered and punished as fallen women in order to save their children (ibid, 185). With Reader and many others (e.g. Scott 2007; Halberstam 2011;

[26] For similar discussions of hutus' "proactive resistance" see (Lemarchand 2009; Mutwarasibo 2017).

Mahmood 2011), I argue that the hierarchical ranking of subject performance that privileges certain forms of action is biased against women. That is, in valuing certain notions of heroism over slower and less dignified ways of saving lives, or just dealing with suffering, we tend to privilege the actions of men over those of women.

With these discussions, I am trying to get at a notion of agency in social analysis able to capture modes of being, which are complying, accepting, weakened and in other ways constitute the forms of subjectivity commonly left out of discussions of agency. Ashis Nandy's analysis of the self in relation to imperialism in India has relevant insights for this discussion. In Nandy's analysis, he describes how survival in extreme circumstances may require a fragmented and shifting self with "a certain permeability of boundaries" (Nandy 1983, 107). I tie this approach to subjectivity together with my argument about the instability of the surfaces of the state. Because of the state's multiple transgressions and encroachments, a source quoted by Anjan Sundaram describes a sense that "we don't understand where we begin as people and where the state ends" (Sundaram 2015, 93). Survival in this context may, as suggested by Nandy, require a less clearly defined sense of boundary. Fragmented and shifting selves, Nandy argues, have through their historical long-term exposure to man-made suffering developed a 'sharpened instinct' and a 'faster reaction' in dealing with these ongoing and yet incoherent conditions (Nandy 1983, 110). He describes this openness to change as 'vigilance', which 'The Indian' uses in

> surviving outer pressures by refusing to overplay his sense of autonomy and self-respect [...] In his non-heroic ordinariness, he is the archetypal survivor. Seemingly he makes all-round compromises, but he refuses to be psychologically swamped, co-opted or penetrated (ibid, 111).

With his characterization of the subject not penetrated by power, Nandy recalls Scott's account of the subject who is laying it on thick. The Indian, in Nandy's account, only appears to make compromises in order to protect the integrity of his self. Thus, while I take inspiration from Nandy's notion of a fragmented and shifting self, I do not follow the course of his analysis. Rather, in the following section, I draw on Benhabib's notion of 'narrative agency' to explore a different direction in which we might take an analysis of a fragmented and shifting self.

Narrative agency

The notion of narrative agency was first proposed by Seyla Benhabib[27] and consists of "the capacity to say 'I' over time and with relation to others" (Lucas 2017, 3). Narrative agency refers to the subject's ability to construct a meaningful narrative, and not to the actual content of that narrative. As Benhabib puts it: "it is not what

[27] Who in developing it took inspiration from Arendt's work on narrative (Benhabib 1990).

the story is about that matters but, rather, one's ability to keep telling a story about who one is that makes sense to oneself and others" (Benhabib 1999, 347). Thus, in contrast to Nandy, Benhabib does not require that the subject keeps her integrity intact and remains with a stable notion of her "deepest faith" (Nandy 1983, 111). Subjectivity, according to Benhabib is not constituted by "'sameness in time' but rather the capacity to generate meaning over time" (Benhabib 1999, 354). As long as the subject narrates, she is enacting agency.

Benhabib's account of narrative agency is made in response to the constraints poststructuralism is thought to place on agency. In response to Butler's account of performativity, she argues that "speech acts are not only iterations but also innovations and reinterpretations" (Benhabib 1999, 339).[28] In other words, although the subjects' acts are framed by social norms, their actions resignify these norms and thereby create new meaning (an argument that recalls Butler's own stipulations with regards to subversive potential in her account of agency). Benhabib stresses that the subject is always able to tell a story about her role in the world, however much she is thrown into it by forces out of her control. And even if the story she tells herself and others is inconsistent and expresses a commitment to her own subordination, she is still enacting her agency through her narration. Importantly, to Benhabib who strongly emphasizes the subject's capacity for critique (Benhabib 1995), the continued capacity for narration begets the capacity to change that story "as circumstances, beliefs and normative commitments change" (Lucas 2017, 7).

I use Benhabib's concept of narrative agency, not to explore the subversive potential of speech acts, but to engage with a phenomenon from my research encounters to which it can speak productively. In article 2 and article 4, I analyze an account of acceptance, where it is described as a consciously chosen mental state. The context for acceptance in these encounters was a conception of how a person's mental and emotional state can determine her or his survival of extreme conditions. My respondents in Rwanda have often told me that they cannot "afford" an emotional reaction to situations of hardship, whether they caused by the environment, by representatives of the state, or by family members. A similar approach to emotions as threatening was expressed by my research assistant after an interview with a graduate from Iwawa, where he told me that he appreciated how I had held back my questions for a while, because our interviewee was on the verge of tears. What had happened in the situation was that I had gotten tired myself, experiencing some degree of 'compassion fatigue' (Figley 1995), I think, as the narrative was hard to listen to. In a dark room, looking in the same direction as my interviewee and feeling like my head was full to the brim and unable to absorb

[28] More generally, Benhabib distances herself from poststructuralist approaches to subjectivity in general, as her theories stress the subject's capacity for critique (Benhabib 1995). As such, I am using her characterization differently than how she proposed it. I do this because I would argue that the concept of narrative agency is not opposed to a poststructuralist reading, and I find it helpful in engaging my material.

any more pain, I just kept quiet for a little while. As I sat there, collecting myself and unaware that my interviewee had tears in his eyes, I happened to give him time to collect himself too. The emphasis my assistant placed on his appreciation made me consider firstly, that he might be thinking I should do more to avoid placing our interviewees in emotionally unleashing situations. Secondly, it brought my attention to how threatening it is perceived by people around me in Rwanda to let themselves cry or to be in the presence of tears (see also Brouneus 2010; Bishumba 2016).

In my research concerning life on Iwawa Island, not accepting the situation of living under a constant threat of death by bringing one's emotions fully under control was described as making a person prone to disease and starvation. This approach to emotions recalls Baruch Spinoza's contention that emotions shape what bodies can do, as "the modifications of the body by which the power of action on the body is increased or diminished" (Spinoza 1959, 85). For example, feeling sad or angry about unjust actions increases the effect of those actions on your body. Article 4 discusses narrative agency as a way to act on the narrative my respondents told themselves about their situation. Acceptance thus does two things. Firstly, it protects you from the destructive potential of negative emotions, which were linked directly to deathly starvation by my respondents.[29] Secondly, acceptance can give you a sense of control in a situation where no other forms of control are available. Acceptance entails acting on your emotional state and on your narrative about yourself.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes quotes Clifford Geertz for saying that the only thing that humans could not seem to live with is the idea that life might be utterly random, meaningless and absurd: "Thus, all humans are story-tellers and meaning-makers" (Scheper-Hughes 2008, 44). Following Benhabib, this meaning making is an expression of agency. This is also the case when the meanings made are fragmented and shifting. The subject may be co-opted and infiltrated by power through his radical acceptance, but still be enacting agency through his continued narration.[30]

Sense of self

Because article 2 was published at an earlier stage of my PhD research and because of restrictions on its length, it contains a less nuanced account of political subjectivity. What I term 'narrative agency' in article 4, I term 'subduing their sense of self' in article 2. This notion draws on Theodor Adorno and Max

[29] This link between nutrition and control over emotions has also been communicated to me on several occasions, when people around me, such as the cleaning staff in Ministry of Education, perceived me to have lost weight. In these situations, I have often been somewhat strictly told that I might be thinking too much and worrying too much, which is not good for my health.

[30] Her account is presented in contrast to Charles Taylor's, in which he argues that the self is partly defined by its moral commitments, that is, the content of the narrative is central to this account (C. Taylor 1989).

Horckheimer's discussion of Odysseus tactic of self-denial on the cyclops' island. Odysseus, in Homer's *Odyssey* has to pass by the cyclops' island but is told in advance that the cyclops intends to kill him on sight. Since he can only survive his stay on the island by denying his own name, Odysseus introduces himself to the cyclops as 'Udeis', meaning 'no one' in Ancient Greek (Homer 2005). By doing this, he saves his own life by negating himself. I was attracted to this discussion because there seemed to be a parallel between Odysseus' tactic of survival on an island through self-denial, and my respondents' description of their survival tactics[31] – also on an island.

On his way away from the island, Odysseus, shouts out his real name to the cyclops, which has devastating consequences for him and his crew. Odysseus may be said to carry out his self-assertion in the liminal zone – when he is not fully away from the dangers of the island – and my respondents' self-assertion in our interviews, seemed similarly to be taking place in a liminal zone – not fully secured from the dangers associated with Iwawa Island. In Adorno and Horckheimer's interpretation: "the subject Odysseus denies his own identity, which makes him a subject, and keeps himself alive by imitating the amorphous. [...] But his self-assertion – as in all epics, as in civilization in general – is self-denial" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2001, 67–68). Adorno and Horckheimer's project concerns, as the quote suggests, civilization in general, and as such their analysis of the interplay between self-assertion and self-denial differs from mine. My aim is not to use Odysseus to make statements about Enlightenment values but simply to harvest his survival maneuver for its potential to speak to fragmented and shifting selves that imitate the amorphous.

In reconciling my earlier concept of 'subduing their sense of self' with my newer use of the concept 'narrative agency', I draw on Butler's analysis of Georg Hegel's account of stoicism. In his attempt to demonstrate the impossibility of the self-denial involved in stoicism, Hegel argues that "even self-refutation requires a persistent self to enact the withdrawal from its own and other existences" (Butler 1997, 44). Hegel's account is intended as derogatory,[32] yet this insight is useful for analyzing my field material. When my respondents chose not to allow themselves to fully feel their emotional responses to the situation, they may be said to be subduing their sense of self – they describe not being in touch with their emotions of feeling wronged, angry, sad and scared – emotions that they would express in the interview. While this may be read as a tactic of self-denial, the self that denies its emotions is a precondition for the denial. Using Benhabib's notion of narrative

[31] Article 2 uses 'tactic' and 'strategy' interchangeably. While I have since its publication come to see the sense of using de Certeau's distinctions between the two terms, the text is already published.

[32] As is Arendt's account of the shifting self of 'the totalitarian personality': "for if there is such a thing as a totalitarian personality or mentality, this extraordinary adaptability and absence of continuity are no doubt its outstanding characteristics" (Arendt 1958, 306), and yet this perspective on political subjectivity need not be framed as derogatory.

agency, they retain their capacity to say 'I' over time, even as the content of their narration may have contained self-denying maneuvers.

The notion 'sense of self' emphasizes how much a person feels that she or he is in charge of something. How much they feel like themselves. In aspects of the research interview, it is easy to feel that you are in charge because you control the narration of your experience (Jackson 2002). In my interviews, I inquired into the emotional lives of my respondents and thereby took part in producing an emotional engagement with their rehabilitation experience. Feeling in control of your narrative, and feeling something about the rehabilitation experience at all, may have given rise to a stronger sense of self. But I want to stress that my argument is not that they were any more or less themselves in either of the two situations.

On cultural translation

As reflected in the sections above, the thesis uses concepts from Western and other non-Rwandan thinkers to engage with political practices in Rwanda. Reversely, I analyze Kinyarwanda concepts, such as *kwihangana* and *ubwenge*, in order to speak to broader debates about political subjectivity, compliance and resistance. Therefore, I will spend the remainder of this chapter discussing the meaning and use of cultural translation in my arguments.

In Ann Stoler's discussion of Foucault in her history of sexuality in the colonies, she presents a critique of his taking the distinction between "the West" (1995, 5) and its others for granted. In her genealogy, she traces the colonial construction of the concept of 'the West' as a category separate from the rest of the world (ibid). That is, she argues that compartmentalizing 'the West' as a distinct political entity is a product of colonial and imperial attempts at distinguishing the West from its others. Moreover, she illustrates how tensions and anxiety about sexual purity in European politics were closely linked with the fear of racial contamination in the colonies. In this way, the operations of power characterized by Foucault as European, arose in the colonial and imperial encounter and are thus highly relevant for analyses of colonial and postcolonial politics. Arendt's historical analysis of the origins of totalitarianism makes a similar argument. Within the practices of European imperialism, she argues, grew new approaches to violence as an end in its own right. The motion mania of totalitarian movements in Europe arose with the imperial approach to power and violence, which only obtained "an appearance of sense if one understands it in the context of a supposedly permanent process which has no end or aim but itself" (1958, 137).

Mbembe speaks to the same point in his analysis of the emergence of 'Africa' as a concept, and argues that after the 15th century it is impossible to talk about the continent's cultures outside of European hegemony (2001). Rather than conceptualize the forms of power exercised in the postcolonial context as essentially different from other forms of power, Mbembe argues that "the postcolony is a particularly revealing (and rather dramatic) stage on which are

played out the wider problems of subjection" (1992, 3, see also 2003).

In this way, these postcolonial arguments parallel the poststructuralist problematization of the not co-opted subject. That is, they argue against "a naive belief in cultural purity, in untouched cultures whose histories are uncontaminated by those of their neighbors or of the west" (Ortner 1995, 176). In this thesis, I follow these approaches to culture and argue that the forms of violence my analyses engage carry many traces from historical and contemporary colonial, imperial and other influences. As such, the concepts 'Western' and other non-Rwandan thinkers have developed to engage them often provide helpful insights.

My critique of Scott's system of thought and my characterization of *kwihangana* therefore differ from a recent argument of Rollason concerning exactly these same topics. Rollason's argument is based on the contention that Rwandans do not think of themselves as individuals, and therefore they cannot be attributed individual intentions.

> For [Scott's] individuals, threats to integrity in the form of impingements on their sense of self, such as humiliation, loss of income, and diminished status, are pressing and can be assumed to motivate resistance. The core of the argument constitutes an ethnographic critique of this model by demonstrating that Rwandans do not think of themselves as people in this way (2018, 97).

At first glance, Rollason's ethnographic critique, which is based on his understanding of *kwihangana* as a concept that promotes a forgiving attitude, can be seen as offering a solution to the problem I sketched in the very beginning of this thesis – that I don't know how to apologize in Kinyarwanda. By taking away an individual sense of self, away goes the individual blame, and away goes my need to apologize. I can simply say '*wihangane*' with confidence and forget the Western bias that causes my frustration with this option. While I do agree that my uneasiness with saying '*wihangane*' as an apology relates to my non-Rwandan background, I find several problems with Rollason's very sharp distinction between 'Rwandan' and 'Western' conceptions of the person.

To begin with, Rollason's characterization of 'Rwandans' as people who cannot be individually humiliated ignores the vast vocabulary in Kinyarwanda concerning individual humiliation, shame and failure.[33] It also ignores the multitude of examples from empirical research in Rwanda, where people express loss of income and diminished status as a matter concerning them individually (e.g. Thomson 2013, 112, 147). Even if we were to accept the notion that 'Rwandans' used to have a different conception of themselves, being subjected to a specific form of violence – for example, being a hutu orphan whose family was killed by the RPF

[33] Such as *insuzugurwa*, a humiliated or abased person, *gukorwa isoni*, to be ashamed, *guseba*, to be ashamed, *kwigaya*, to blame yourself, *kwicuza*, to admit a mistake, *kwicisha bugufi*, to humble yourself, *gutenguha*, to fail, *gutsindwa*, to fail, *kunanira*, to fail someone, *guhemuka*, to fail someone (morally), *gucika amazi*, to be disrespected.

(Jessee 2017, 1) – tends to produce a sense of individual harm, which is reflected in numerous quotes in the literature. Another example of individual harm is presented by Anuradha Chakravarty, who accounts in detail for the abuses directed at 'Olive', an elderly hutu woman, in the informal *gacaca* courts set up to handle accusations of genocidal violence in local communities in 2002 (Chakravarty 2016a). Olive found herself accused of having committed multiple crimes during the genocide but Chakravarty characterizes the accusations as motivated by bribes, arguing that Olive was unlikely to have committed them. She was now suffering routine beatings from the police, harassment from her community, and the imprisonment of almost her whole family and herself for eight years. In Chakravarty's account: "She was worn out, psychologically overwhelmed, socially isolated, and paranoid – eyes darting at the window during a private interview as she muttered nervously 'they will kill me if they knew she was speaking of these things'" (ibid, 259). Being imprisoned due an accusation directed against her and being the subject of ongoing death threats, Olive may reasonably be considered a person who has a sense of herself as an individual who is suffering harm (as may the numerous other people represented in the work of Chakravarty and others).

Finally, the idea that personal integrity is an "irrelevance in everyday life in Rwanda (cf. Maquet 1961, 169)" (Rollason 2018, 103) is rendered immediately suspicious because the only reference Rollason uses to motivate it comes from the colonial anthropologist, Jacques Maquet. Maquet was a central part of the Belgian colonial administration's attempt to base racial differentiations and discriminations on 'scientific' data. He only interviewed people in the central region of the Rwandan monarchy, and they were all referred to him by missionaries and tutsi clergy. His perceptions of social relations in Rwanda have therefore been thoroughly discredited (Grosse 1996; Uvin 2002; Vansina 2004).

Indeed, academic attempts to identify how "local concepts of persons and social relations" (Rollason 2018, 109) differ from the 'Western' concepts we "impose" (ibid) are often framed in a manner that is eerily similar to those of colonial scientific enterprises. These were similarly focused on the timeless continuity of native cultures, and how sharply they differed from those of 'the West'. Finally, as academics we are always imposing our concepts and interpretations, however much we claim that ours are more 'local' than those of other researchers.

While maintaining the view that analyzing a specific Rwandan ontology of sovereignty and subjectivity is unhelpful, I follow Jean and John Comaroff in arguing for the importance of taking "the endogenous historicity of local worlds" (1992, 27) into account. Within this view on culture, pieces of reality, "however much borrowed from or imposed by others, are woven together through the logic of a group's own locally and historically evolved bricolage" (Ortner 1995, 176). While politics of patience in Rwanda are thus not unrelated to broader global

political developments,[34] I analyze them with a focus on the meanings they take on within Rwanda's historically developed bricolage. That is, by focusing on the context of Rwanda's present and historical practices of the state together with cultural practices.

Summary

This thesis' theoretical approaches draw on poststructuralist approaches to analyzing sovereignty and subjectivity. With a point of departure in Foucault's nonessentialist ontology of power, I examine sovereignty as a tentative and always emerging power and violence, which is enforced by numerous actors, not all formally employed by the state. These actors may be seen as carrying out both lawmaking and law-preserving violence, representing as well as transgressing the law. Police officers, for example, preserve the law by arresting 'delinquent' young men and transgress it by receiving payments from family members to have their nephews arrested. As I will show in the different articles, my respondents have described inscrutability in what was law preserving – the state's official agenda – and what was law transgressing violence. In this thesis' framework, I emphasize the prevalence of 'grey areas' in Rwandan governance as opposed to a clearly defined public transcript. Grey areas arise out of the continuous changes in laws, policies and leadership, and the places where it is unclear whether state representatives act in their own or the state's interest, making it difficult for everyone involved in Rwandan governance to know what will constitute a transgression in a certain area. In this political context, I propose that Lacan's notion of becoming mottled against a mottled background provides a helpful metaphor for engaging with political subjectivity. My analyses focus on practices of compliance, acceptance and patience, framed by my respondents as their way of dealing with a sense of the impossibility of knowing what the authorities want from them or how to give it to them. I moreover pay special attention to these phenomena in a conceptual move to criticize tendencies in social analysis, which emphasize the strength, dignity and subtle resistance of subordinated groups. Our frameworks should not foreclose the possibility of analyzing modes of being, wherein dignity is or feels lost, should not

[34] RPF's practices of actively encouraging patience may be related to the international security discourses, which increasingly emphasize "resilience" (Schott 2015, 185). David Chandler characterizes a historical shift in the objective of international relations from the 1990s to the post-2000s. The security discourse of the 1990s, he argues, framed non-Western others as 'victims' in need of external humanitarian intervention to protect and save them from their coercive non-Western regimes (Chandler 2012). In contrast, the "post-interventionist paradigm" (Chandler 2012, 213) embraces the language of prevention, resilience and empowerment, as response to the lack of success liberal internationalism had in intervening in other cultural contexts during the 1990s. Catherine Honeyman, on a similar note, characterizes RPF's approach to governance as "post-developmental" characterized by a citizenry of heavily regulated self-reliance (Honeyman 2016, 6).

ignore the many who die, and should be able to capture agency as expressed in the compliance with norms and rules. Finally, this chapter has discussed my approach to cultural translation. I have argued that practices of governance in the West and its imperial others are imbricated with each other as politics in the colonial encounter heavily influenced internal European politics, as well as concepts about what came to be considered pre-colonial political traditions. With this stipulation, I still follow the notion that we can talk about a context's endogenous historicity and analyze how global trends in governance are expressed within Rwanda's own historically developed bricolage.

3. Methodology

This chapter discusses my methodological approach. In what follows I will outline the concrete field work procedures, I carried out while doing and attempting to do research about male youth rehabilitation in Rwanda. I then move on to discuss the role of failure in ethnographic methodology in general and proceed to introduce my own approach to 'research that hurts'. Following that section, I discuss the methodological challenges and necessary cautions of doing research in what may be termed a 'closed context'. Afterwards, I turn to my embodied positionality and my use of autoethnography as both process and product. Finally, this chapter's last section problematizes informed consent and begins the critique of empathetic engagement in the field, which I will continue in article 2.

Fields and fieldwork procedures

I first arrived in Rwanda in 2013 and did three months of fieldwork about the rehabilitation centre placed on Iwawa Island in Lake Kivu by the border of DRC. My research interest was the gender aspects of the Rwandan government's attempt to produce societal security through an intimate civic education aiming at reforming loitering and delinquent male youth into productive members of society. I worked with a research assistant who was also my translator in the majority of my interviews. During this fieldwork, I did one or more interviews with fifty graduates from the center, usually of about an hour each. I interviewed several members of their families, teachers from the center, trainees on the island, involved local, and ministerial government officials, and visited the island twice. In one area, I interviewed seven female sex workers to contrast their experiences of arrest with those of my male respondents. I moreover kept a field journal, where I attempted to keep track of relevant experiences as well as my emotional life during the field research. The reason this fieldwork ended up being heavily based on interviews, was that it was not possible for me to spend longer periods of time on the island itself. As will be illustrated in the account of my attempted PhD research, the island is hard to access due to its critical geographical position in terms of Rwandan military security and due to the involved authorities' reluctance to have foreign visitors present for more than a few hours at a time.

After finishing my master's thesis, I stayed in Rwanda and worked as a consultant in a private company during the fall of 2014. During this time, I found out that I

would have the opportunity to do a PhD, and since I was in the country already, I started the procedures of re-applying for a research permit. It appeared to be going well, as the relevant ministry, Ministry of Youth and ICT (MYICT), was willing to work with me again. Two months before the planned start of my field research, I had handed in my application with all the relevant signatures for a research permit at the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). When I landed in Rwanda in July 2015, I thought it would be a matter of days before I would have the permit and be able to start my research. Instead, every time I went to follow up on the processing of my application, I was met with a new requirement or a new reason for the delay. My assumption had been that because I had already gone through the procedures to gain access once, I would know exactly what to do the second time. But the second time I applied, both the official rules and the more informal part of the process had changed. Up until November 2015, it seemed to me that there would be an end to the requirements and that I would eventually get the permit. By the end of November, however, the explanations for the delay from MINEDUC were no longer convincing. The person in charge of signing the permits was busy, was away on holiday, away on business and so on. It was time to reconsider what to do without the permit, and I stopped going to MINEDUC for follow-ups. As my interest was in gender, masculinity and state-making, I decided to analyze some of the examples of public sex scandals among government officials reported in the media. In this period too, I kept a field diary and thought it would serve as a good back-drop for these discussions.

In April 2016, I received a call from an employee of the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration. I needed to come in for an interview about my residence permit. After going to the Office for Inspection of Foreigners to be interrogated the following Monday and Tuesday, the intelligence officer confiscated my passport and gave me seven days to leave the country. Packing my bags to leave the week after, I was terrified that border officials would go through my belongings to look for illegally obtained data, that I might be framed for trying to smuggle drugs, or that for some reason I would never get my passport back. I arrived early before my flight and sat with my friends drinking coffee in the airport's café. The immigration official discretely called me over to him when he came, gave me back my passport and connected me with an airport official responsible for securing that I ended up on the plane. No one went through my luggage, the airport official was polite, helpful and did nothing to rush me or show others that I was leaving against my will. Every border official interacted with me in a friendly manner with no sign of knowing that I was being thrown out. More than being scared for myself, I feared what the consequences would be for my research assistant and my, then boyfriend, now husband. Neither person has since my deportation been contacted by Rwandan government authorities about their association with me. And I have since then been able to return to Rwanda without being interrogated about my past.

In my experiences of long-term failure and deportation, there are a lot of

dynamics concerning the functioning of the state as well as government threat and violence, which I argue can fruitfully be related to broader discussions about these topics in Rwanda and abroad. Moreover, my emotional life in this period lead me to reflect differently about political subjectivity as it had been expressed and explained to me in interviews during my research in 2013-2014.

As mentioned above, I have also lived in longer stretches of time in Rwanda without being in a research position. My husband is Rwandan, and our child is both Danish and Rwandan. My professional and personal life in Rwanda obviously plays a role in 'disciplining my intuition' (Trigger, Forsey, and Meurk 2012, 516). Participating in weddings, church sermons, and many other aspects of social life, reading children's books in Kinyarwanda and discussing aspects of raising children with Rwandan parents affect how I direct my analytical attention. But I strive to keep the Rwandans, I know from my personal life, out of my research accounts. In distinguishing between the situations, I analyze, and those I do not, I take into account whether I introduced myself to the involved people as a researcher, or whether they know me as their neighbor, as my husband's wife, or my daughter's mother. In 2013-2014 and 2015-2016, I consistently presented myself as a researcher, and so, while the distinction between friends and research participants is often blurred (Tillmann-Healy 2003; Povinelli 2013), these periods work as my delimitation on the subjects I study. Exceptions are public events where the anonymity of the participants can also be ensured, or my own mundane experiences involving people who cannot be identified (e.g. the motodriver involved in the vignette in the start of the thesis). Studying Kinyarwanda is another exception because I have been doing it throughout all the time I have spent in Rwanda, and it informs my research practice. As argued by Parin Dossa, Marsha Henry and others, the traditional ethnographic distinctions between home and field, and between anthropologists as mobile and their research subjects as immobilized are increasingly untenable (Dossa 1997; Henry 2003). Fieldworkers conduct research in multiple 'homes' and 'fields' (Dossa 1997, 506) and with global communication networks, the field is increasingly able to reach the anthropologist's 'home' (Madden 2017). In what follows, I discuss my methods and methodology in relation to my 'field'.

This field is made up by four different spaces. The four articles each emphasize one of these spaces in particular. The first space is the rehabilitation center on Iwawa Island. While I have only been to the island twice and only for few hours at a time, the specter of the center came through in my many interviews with graduates from Iwawa. Article 1 is devoted to analyzing what kind of space was constituted by these narratives. The second space is the interview situation itself, and especially the emotional dynamics of the interviews I carried out with Iwawa graduates, public servants and family members. Article 2 constitutes an analysis of political subjectivity in this space. The third space is made up by the many government offices and state regulated spaces, I visited in my failed attempt at gaining a research permit. Article 3 analyzes these spaces with a view to analyze the state's moving surfaces and often unclear objectives. The fourth space is constituted

by a mixed set of situations that took place outside of interviews, government offices and the rehabilitation center, during walks to and from interviews, and in other spaces in between formalized research activities. As I will elaborate on below, I choose not to specify the geographical locations of these situations in order to make it as difficult as possible for the involved persons to be identified. Article 4 reads these situations together in analysis of the different meanings and uses of patience expressed in these spaces.

Ethnography and failure

Ethnography has an interesting and ambivalent relationship with failure. On the one hand, ethnographic texts examining failure and related notions of entanglement, disappointment, abjection, rupture, trouble, getting lost and getting stuck (MacLure 2011, 997) in field research have become canonical in the discipline for their honesty and insights into the conditions for producing knowledge with other people. Among these classics are Michel Leiris' *L'Afrique fantôme* (2008), which with Leiris' self-directed gaze provides important insights about, among other things, the institutional conditions of ethnographic expeditions (Clarck-Taoua 2002). Laura Bohannan's *Return to Laughter* (1964) engages her personal triumphs and failures in studying witchcraft in a way that enriches the reader's understanding of these phenomena as well as methodology in general. Elizabeth Fernea's *Guests of the Sheik* (1989) similarly examines her own insecurities in Arabic and social custom, resulting in an ethnography that is still lauded for its rich portrayal of the context she studied. Finally, Ruth Behar's *The Vulnerable Observer* (2012) uses her personal experiences in a deliberate attempt to "break your heart" (Behar 2012, 161) in order to advance an anthropological practice lived and written in a personal voice.[35] Commenting on the role of failure in ethnographic description, Geertz defines the whole practice as minimally successful. As "a task at which no one ever does more than not utterly fail" (1988, 143). In their use of reflexivity about their changing roles in the field, these works speak to "[c]ulture, power, politics, economy, history, philosophy, and humanity" (Ashkenazi and Markowitz 1999, 8). I will unfold the argument that reflexivity can be used this way in the section on autoethnography.

On the other hand, 'failure' is jarring in the ears and eyes of many in the discipline. Several texts reference a fear that discussions about failure in field research will discredit ethnographic argumentation (Ashkenazi and Markowitz 1999; Pollard 2009; Clifford and Marcus 2008). In the phrasing of Michael Ashkenazi and Fran Markowitz: "As students, certain issues are not discussed; as fieldworkers, certain things are not to be mentioned; and as exponents of our

[35] Other relevant examples are Georges Balandier's *L'Afrique ambiguë* (2010), Jean Briggs' *Never in Anger* (1975), Paul Rabinow's (2011) *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* and Jean-Paul Dumont's *The Headman and I* (1978).

experience, certain things are not to be published" (1999, 15). A growing literature in qualitative methodology has argued for the productive value of failure in field research (Nairn, Munro, and Smith 2005; King 2009; J. A. Hamilton 2011; Bengtsson 2014; Levy, Halse, and Wright 2016; Harrowell, Davies, and Disney 2017). George Marcus has gone as far as asserting that in contemporary anthropological studies, the empirical findings from fieldwork are decreasing in significance, producing "a derivative of the existing knowledge of others" (2006, 115). He asserts that the value of fieldwork in the process of producing ethnography may now be that it "provides stimulation and ideas, but is relatively 'thin' in materials, [...] it is the diffuse efforts to come to terms with the *lacks and failures* of fieldwork afterwards that provide the richest and 'thickest' materials" (ibid). I will proceed with a discussion of 'thickness' below. Yet, reviewers and colleagues have warned authors of such arguments to choose failures that are ""just bad enough" [...] that would not damage our reputations" (Harrowell, Davies, and Disney 2017, 7). A recent critique of the current state of failure literature in qualitative methodology has argued that "current efforts to reclaim failure [...] tend to depersonalise and distance us from the lived experience of failure [...] We also note a tendency to 'intellectualise' failure, in contrast to [...] the highly charged embodied, affectual and, above all, present-tense experience of failure" (Whittle, Brewster, and Medd 2018). In this context, it is worth noting that the earlier works cited above remained marginal for many years and were only (relatively) recently revisited in the discipline (Clifford 2008).

Participant observation and thick description

The tension surrounding failure in ethnography may be related to the tension underlying the method of participant observation. Since the early field work accounts of Bronislaw Malinowski (2014, 2015), practitioners of participant observation have been required to enact a delicate balance between perceived subjectivity and objectivity. The ethnographer's personal experiences, especially those of participation and empathy, have been characterized as central to the research process, but they are still to be restrained by the impersonal ideals of observation and 'objective' distance (Clifford 2008). In other words, as Ashkenazi and Markowitz point out, participant observation is based on two paradoxical components. First, "the epistemology of positivist empiricism", which argues in favor of distance between the researcher self and her 'data' to avoid contamination, and secondly, the fundamentally conflicting assumption "that culture can be known by sensual experience" (1999, 2; see also R. Jones 1999; I. Clark and Grant 2015).

Because the researcher's body is in this way essentially involved in the production of ethnographic knowledge, it inevitably becomes entangled in the research context. Reflexivity about the researcher's role in the research context has therefore been argued to constitute an essential part of ethnographic argumentation (Clifford 2008). This move forms part of a poststructuralist critique of

representation of culture. It questions what D. A. Miller calls "the panoptic immunity" of the liberal subject, who is entitled to examine the lives of others, while maintaining the privacy of "an integrated, autonomous and 'secret' self" (D. A. Miller 1989, 162; see also Said 1979; MacLure 2011). Autoethnography is one of the proposed methodological moves responding to this critique. It is an approach to research and writing that seeks to "describe and systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011), and I will return to this discussion below.

Contemporary practices of reflexivity and autoethnography have been criticized for being too self-indulgent and self-involved, which then ironically may lead to "elitism, [...] solipsism, [and] putting the whole world in quotation marks" (Clifford 2008, 25). When the researcher dives into the rabbit hole of her own emotional life and entanglements in the field, her resulting ethnography does not contain enough material about 'the world out there' seems to be the logic of this type of critique. Basing arguments on personal experiences of failure in field research may well be subjected to a similar line of critique. In the traditional balance between notions of subjectivity and objectivity, the scale may be tipping too far towards the researcher self in failure-based argumentation, which can explain part of the reason why researchers are not always comfortable sharing more than 'just bad enough' failures. Yet, this thesis argues that it is possible to derive 'thick description' from experiences of failure.

Geertz first proposed using Gilbert Ryle's concept of "thick description" to describe what ethnographers do (2017, 6). Thickness is by Sherry Ortner conceptualized as "producing understanding through richness, texture, and detail" (1995, 174). Ethnographic thickness has historically taken different forms. It has been related to exhaustiveness, "producing [...] almost unreadably detailed descriptive ethnography" (ibid). Thickness has also been associated with holism, "the idea that object under study was 'a' highly integrated 'culture' and that it was possible to describe the entire system or at least fully grasp the principles underlying it." (ibid). Few contemporary anthropologists subscribe to holism in this sense, as it entails the hubris of holistic vision and willfully ignoring the "innumerable gaps and fissures in all societies, including the so-called premodern societies that were imagined to be more integrated and whole than we fragmented moderns" (ibid). In contemporary ethnographic argumentation, issues of thickness often focus on contextualization with Carol Greenhouse terming ethnography "the science of contextualization" (2012, 2). Providing context has been done by examining the ways in which the subject under analysis in an ethnographic study relates to global processes of the world system (ibid; Stepputat and Larsen 2015). In an analytical move that takes the ethnographic focus back to the endogenous historicity of local worlds, the Comaroffs emphasize the need always to contextualize the data produced through fieldwork and archival research within the forms of practice within which they took shape:

> If texts are to be more than literary topoi, scattered shards from which we presume worlds, they have to be anchored in the processes of their production, in the orbits of connection and influence that give them life and force (1992,34).

With respect to studies of violence and uncertainty, anthropologists have argued in favor of viewing "crisis as context" (Vigh 2008, 8), because ongoing insecurity and uncertainty structure the lives lived in a number of social contexts (Cooper and Pratten 2015). Rather than viewing crisis as a temporary rupture, these studies propose analyzing "radical, routinized uncertainty" (Cooper and Pratten 2015, 1) as the context itself. Following the Comaroffs, Ashkenazi and Markowitz argue that writing sexualized field encounters into ethnographic descriptions thickens them, "making them valid representations of real activities of real people in which the anthropologist [...] is embedded." (1999, 14).

Drawing on these arguments, I engage failures and sexualized entanglements in field research in order to produce thick description. "Failure", Margaret Werry and Róisín O'Gorman argue, "is symptomatic of a current order" (2012, 106). As such examining forms failure and the forms of power and violence in which they become failures can meaningfully constitute contextualization. Concretely, I contextualize these experiences by using empirical material from sources other than my PhD fieldwork, e.g. analyzing the Rwandan crisis as context, analyzing popular songs, stories shared on social and paper-based media, the ethnographic arguments of others, historical accounts and by discussing the meaning of concepts in Kinyarwanda. In my approach to contextualize experiences of failure, I draw on Lee Ann Fujii's concept of 'accidental ethnography' (Fujii 2015). Fujii distinguishes between what she terms 'procedure-driven methods' or 'structured methods' and 'accidental ethnography' (Fujii 2015, 3). By procedure-driven or structured methods she refers to methods such as interviews, surveys, archival research, and planned participant observation. The central component is that the researcher has planned ahead whom to talk to, what questions to ask and what prompts to use. Her definition of accidental ethnography is moments of insight that arise randomly, where the content and timing cannot be controlled.

> Just as cockfights can teach us about social status and masculinity in Bali (Geertz [1973] 2017) and a massacre of cats about labor relations in 18th-century France (Darnton 2009), so, too, can the treatment of stray dogs help us understand post-war politics in Bosnia (Fujii 2015, 2).

The emphasis on the lack of control of the research process is also reflected in the words of Geertz, who argues that: "You don't exactly penetrate another culture, as the masculinist image would have it. You put yourself in its way, and it bodies forth and enmeshes you" (Geertz 1995, 44). What systematizes the data produced through accidents is how the researcher treats it. When you cannot systematize how you happen upon a situation, you can only be systematic about how you engage with it. Article 3 discusses how to learn systematically from sexual harassment and frames this activity as 'research that hurts'.

Research that hurts

Specifically, article 3 examines my sexualized entanglements with a central gatekeeper for its potential to speak to the troubled distinction between state and interpersonal violence in Rwanda. In this way, my reflections are written into a newer tradition of examining researcher vulnerability in fieldwork (see also Behar 2012; Pina-Cabral 2013; Gable 2014; Caretta and Jokinen 2017). Emphasizing vulnerability may be seen as a response to how the increased focus on reflexivity and positionality, that grew from the 1980s and onwards, led to many feminist methodological engagements with embodied positionality encouraging scholars to "reflect on his or her own privilege" (Kezar 2003, 405). The emphasis on privilege is based on an assumption that "most faculty come from middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds and are still predominantly White" (Kezar 2003: 406). Recent critiques of the foregrounding of privilege in accounts of positionality has highlighted the multiple positionalities researchers embody and asked "under what conditions" (Henry 2007, 71) the researcher can claim her privilege. This is especially the case in the growing literature on sexual harassment in fieldwork, where female researchers describe "conflating privilege and vulnerability" (Caretta and Jokinen 2017, 275; see also Kloß 2016; Moreno 1995; I. Clark and Grant 2015; Johansson 2015). Foucault-inspired approaches to inequality in power relations in the field, where critique is directed at the power of the researcher (Kvale 2006; MacLean 2013), have in this context been criticized for being based on mainly male experiences (I. Clark and Grant 2015; Johansson 2015). In the changing global political landscape, more and more researchers of different genders have moreover found themselves politically exposed and vulnerable while doing fieldwork. This has especially been the case for PhD students (Pollard 2009; Clancy et al. 2014; The Guardian 2016), and researchers working in North American or European universities, but who are also nationals of their research context (Dehghan and Kassam 2016; HRW 2018b).

With my notion of research that hurts, I might be criticized for producing what Ruari-Santiago McBride has characterized as "intellectual masturbation that decries the social and political abuses of researchers and their research" (McBride 2017, 86). Another possible line of critique could be inspired by Joel Robbins argument in favor of going 'beyond the suffering subject' (Robbins 2013). Janeja and Bandak draw on Robbins and Arendt (1990) to argue that efforts, like mine, which emphasize hurt, tend to produce accounts that rest on pity.

> Pity may heighten the awareness of the predicament of the other, but while doing so it presents the other as remote. […] an anthropologically ethnographic engagement needs to address more than pity, so that we can learn something through the different ways the world is being negotiated, lived, endured and acted upon (Janeja and Bandak 2018, 9).

This binary between the suffering and the acting subject, I argue, relates to the agential bias referenced by Reader. In this view, the subject has to counter-act violence in order to come off as human enough and recognizable enough in our writings. Presenting painful narratives without this counterbalance is seen to evoke only pity. When I write about my painful experiences in research, the intention is not to produce pity, although I do not mind if someone should pity me. Unlike Arendt and Luc Boltanski (Arendt 1990; Boltanski 1999), I am not so sure that pity is an inherently problematic attitude. To think so, again, seems to imply that there is something wrong with the people being weak and weakened, rather than with the violence that weakens them. The intention, rather, is to communicate the work of the symbolic violence of sexual harassment on my body. Considering texts that center on hurt to evoke *only* pity, I argue, represents what Doris Sommer has called 'incompetent reading' (Sommer 1994). Following Sommer and Lather, I argue that texts about violence do not need to be easily digestible, and that it is fair to ask the reader to engage with the material in a way that produces more than pity. The hope that my reflections about sexual harassment can produce this form of engagement is inspired by existing discussions about how reflexivity about our own positionalities can help us critically engage with the concepts we use to categorize others. As argued by Henry:

> If we, as researchers, recognize some of the problems with the labels that we use in representing ourselves, or the ones that are assigned to us in the field, it can help us to become aware of the ways in which we construct our participants. This may also enable us to recognize that names and positions in the research process are not static, but conditional, contingent and shifting (2003, 240).

Henry's argument is presented in a discussion of the different ways she found herself ethnically typed in her field research with Indian women. In my characterization of research that hurts, this perspective guides my examination of the conditionality of the researcher position as powerful, which may lead to paying further attention to the precariousness of other powerful positions. The man I refer to as Fred was in his sexual harassment of me in a powerful and dominating position. Nevertheless, he is in many ways more vulnerable to the violence of the RPF state than I am. He cannot leave the reach of RPF as easily as I can, and being involved in ministry work exposes him to the continuous "government and army reshuffles" (Verhoeven 2012, 276), where powerful men continue to fall. His ability to tell his side of the story in publication is also significantly more limited than mine.

The specific form of research that hurts, examined in this thesis, relates closely to the methodological challenges of doing research in closed contexts.

Research in closed contexts

There are numerous limitations to the methods possible in closed contexts. The

selection of research sites and choice of fieldwork techniques are relatively constrained compared with more open contexts. Some qualitative methods, like photography, social mapping, or focus group interviewing, are ill-advised as respondents may have good reasons to be anxious about being clearly identified by the researcher, or by other members of their community (Glasius et al. 2017). Some researchers working in closed contexts have argued that recording respondents should be done with utmost caution or not done at all, in case the recordings should get confiscated, or simply because it adds unnecessary anxiety for the research participants (Gentile 2013; Purdeková 2015). Quantitative analyses too are often troubled in closed contexts. When elections are rigged, it takes away from the utility of voting statistics, while unreliability reduce the usefulness of other official statistics and mass surveys (Goode 2010; Koch 2013; Goode and Ahram 2016; Ansoms et al. 2017). Within these contexts, there are also different norms surrounding the expression of opinions. Extreme violence, poverty, or threat of oppression easily produces a "climate of fear" (Mitchell 1990, 557), and the less blatantly violent fields of power relations (Bourdieu 2010) affect how opinions are articulated in the first place (Koch 2013). Finally, the uncertainty about how sovereignty is exercised in closed contexts, makes it hard to assess risks for both researchers and researched. As argued by Glasius et al:

> Most of the time, we probably will not be crossing a red line, but the lines are not fixed; they move, for us and for our respondents. In all probability, nothing will happen. But the latent threat that something can happen, to you or your respondents, is what is specific about authoritarian regimes, and hence also authoritarian fieldwork (Glasius et al. 2017, 9).

Cyanne Loyle writes about Rwanda that its regime creates a gray area around certain research topics: "Restrictions are vague and punishments appear random" (Loyle 2016, 924). Article 3 studies this form of vague and random exercise of state violence to speak to broader debates about how the state works in Rwanda.

Permits in closed contexts

In addition to the vague and randomly exercised character of laws on research in Rwanda, they present an ethical dilemma. Everyone who does research in Rwanda is liable to ethical failure. That is, many guidelines for ethical research state that researchers are to 1) Obey the laws of the research country, and 2) Protect participants' anonymity (British Sociological Society 1993; cf. Horton 2008; American Anthropological Association 2012), and these two objectives cannot be reconciled in contemporary Rwanda. When applying for a research permit, researchers declare that they will allow MINEDUC to review their data and that they will not take any "raw unfinished data" (MINEDUC 2013) out of the country without having it endorsed by a relevant government institution. Are researchers

now to obey the laws or protect their participants' anonymity?

Caleb Wall and John Overton have responded to the clash between demands from ethics boards in universities and the practical ethical needs of researchers and researched in Uzbekistan by terming the former 'unethical ethics' (2006) . Other researchers in closed contexts have similarly chosen to override the laws of their research context (Thomson 2012). Out of the seven authors of *Research, Ethics, and Risk in the Authoritarian Field*, only one had ever sought government permission to do their research (Glasius et al. 2017). In my conversations with other researchers working in fields of violence and closure, I am often met with surprise over the fact that I would apply for permission at all. Any researcher working in Rwanda, however, knows that doing more than very short-term research in the country without a permit is a practical impossibility (Thomson 2012; Begley 2012; Sundberg 2016; Purdeková 2015). During my first fieldwork, I was constantly asked for my permit, also by homeless men on the street. As I interpreted the situation, these men asked to see my permit in order to ensure that they would not be in trouble for having talked to me. Many researchers who have worked in Rwanda have reported instances of their respondents being hauled in for interviews with representatives of the intelligence service, so that they may know what the research is really about (Davenport and Stam 2009; Begley 2012; Sundberg 2016), or about research participants being punished for talking to researchers (Berglund 2012). From this perspective, obtaining a research permit in a country like Rwanda may be viewed as an ethical responsibility in relation to our respondents. Doing research without a permit makes our respondents complicit in a crime against the regime, a crime whose potential consequences are usually worse for them than for us.

This brings me to the somewhat impossible situation of arguing that it is unethical to live up to the laws of the research country, and that it is unethical not to live up to them. In practice, most Rwanda researchers conduct their research in a tense navigation of these paradoxical ethical claims (Thomson, Ansoms, and Murison 2012). Larissa Begley proposes that researchers in Rwanda must "appear to be on everyone's sides" (Begley 2012, 77). In this way, researchers working in contexts like Rwanda are – like ethnographers in general – placed in a position as 'tricksters' "promising […] not to lie, but never undertaking to tell the whole truth either" (Clifford 2008, 6; see also Metcalf 2002; Meijl 2005; Crapanzano 2009; MacLure 2011; Coleman 2015), but more acutely so. More acutely so, because of the continuously changing terms of research, and because the stakes are higher for everyone involved.

In the interrogation room where I was interviewed prior to my deportation, I remember feeling unjustly accused of conducting illegal research. Since I had not been conducting what counts as 'research' within MINEDUC's stated guidelines (I had not been using 'structured methods' (Fujii 2015), moving about with the purpose of distributing questionnaires, doing interviews or the like), I felt like my interviewer had nothing on me. But as is reflected in my production of a full PhD

thesis, I was doing research in a different sense, and thus, in a trickster position, telling myself that I was innocent, at least of the crime as stated in the interrogation office. Against the mottled background of Rwanda's arbitrary and random exercise of its research regulations, I was practicing mottled ethics. Ethical tensions related to working in closed contexts are also the subject of my analysis in article 2.

Writing about closed contexts

As argued above, thick description relates to contextualization, for the Comaroffs by anchoring data in the "processes of their production" (J. L. Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, 34). In the case of closed contexts, however, there are some circumstances where it makes sense to slightly obscure these processes. With regards to her research concerning the Rwandan genocide, Fujii argues that ethical responsibilities do not belong in the field but continue throughout the phase of publication and dissemination. Preparing ones written work for publication, she argues, places the researcher in a position where professional incentives and ethical obligations can pull in different directions. Producing the thickest and most thorough description can clash with the need for confidentiality and privacy (2012, 721). She describes a strategy of trying her best to hide the identities of her respondents, and of working

> from a level of near paranoia that some ambitious Rwandan civil servant would comb through the pages of my book to figure out exactly where I was doing my research and to whom I spoke (ibid).

There were details about her respondents' identities, which made it possible to identify them in a small and intensely administrated country, but that she still included in her publications because they were important to her arguments. Looking back, she argues in favor of weighing such choices more carefully. Fujii has since her publications returned to Rwanda and found the respondents she worried about unaffected by her publications. Still, I have written this thesis with her caution in mind. It is deliberate when I omit contextual information about my respondents. Although context is interesting and adds thickening to a description, I have not always provided it. Earlier in this text, I quoted a person 'in the process of evaluating Iwawa' because it is a task shared by several different institutions (WDA 2013), and as such, this descriptor blurs the identity of the person. In article 4, I deliberately chose to analyze stories about people I never met as they were presented to me by 'Gilles' and 'Bosco'. As opposed to instances that happened to themselves, or that I have witnessed myself, it is possible to publish these stories without anyone involved being identified. My motivation is that Gilles' and Bosco's takes, on what happened to others, are interesting in themselves. Their interpretation of the way power worked in situations somewhat removed from themselves speak to their conceptions of sovereignty and subjectivity. The point of

these stories is not what actually happened, but how they interpreted the situation. A similar methodological move is proposed by Ellis et al. in their discussion of obscuring the context in autoethnographic accounts: "the essence and meaningfulness of the research story is more important than the precise recounting of detail" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011).

This methodological move departs somewhat from what the Comaroffs have called the "*a priori* privilege" (J. Comaroff and Comaroff 2003, 153) attributed to first-hand knowledge generated by participant observation within ethnography. Within this approach to studying people, the dominant model of fieldwork has been a "celebrated and mystified notion of 'being there'" (Hannerz 2003, 202). Closed contexts, however, place restraints both on the practical possibility of 'being there' to see events play out first hand, and, as I shall argue in article 2, on the ethical defensibility of trying to creep 'in there' where people feel invaded and threatened by the researcher presence (see also Boesten and Henry 2018). Related to this caution, another purpose of the added layer of separation from the story is that it makes it very difficult to identify, e.g. Gilles and Bosco, because anyone could have shared a story about someone else, even if it happened to be true. Instead of providing context about the concrete situation, I provide context about the theme discussed. Gilles' story concerns his friend's conflict with his uncle over land ownership, and his fear that the uncle was poisoning him. This form of conflict is common in Rwanda, where an estimated 90% of the population rely on agriculture for survival (Ingelaere 2014), and land disputes easily turn into life or death conflicts with poisonings as a common cause of death (Buckley-Zistel 2006; M. Shyaka 2007). Bosco's story concerns his friend's arrest for 'genocide ideology', a type of arrest that has also been very common in post-genocide Rwanda (Waldorf 2011). In this way, I am hoping to produce the effect of making it difficult for my respondents to recognize themselves in my writings, while making it easy for them to recognize the commonality of the themes I explore. Some of my respondents would be able to recognize themselves in my writings, but by withholding information that could be used to identify them, I wager that no one but the person her/himself will. My research assistant is another person, whose anonymity I prioritize over the argumentation value of discussing his ethnicity, his relation to our respondents, his age etc. Connections and/or tensions brought about by these aspects of his identity, constitute relevant contextual information for the practices that produced my field material; it thickens the description. But he prefers to remain blurry in my writings, and I respect this preference. Thus, there are ways to make more detailed descriptions of my field practice than what I present in this thesis. But given the context, I have chosen not to include certain forms of information.

In this way, my field material is fragmented because I worked in a context where I had limited control over the ways in which I obtained it. But it is also fragmented because I have chosen to present it in this way, as this form of representation makes it much more unclear whom I am describing and brings my research practice

further away from home. Making virtue out of a situation I had preferred to be different, this form of fragmented representation can be seen as a form of poststructuralist argumentation. In Clifford's discussion of Richard Price's ethnography about Saramaka people in Suriname, he writes that:

> (The book avoids a smoothed-over, monological form, presenting itself as literally pieced-together, full of holes.) [It] is evidence of the fact that acute political and epistemological self-consciousness need not lead to ethnographic self-absorption, or to the conclusion that it is impossible to know anything certain about other people. Rather, it leads to a concrete sense of why a Saramaka folktale, featured by Price, teaches that "knowledge is power, and that one must never reveal all of what one knows" (Price 2002, 14) (Clifford 2008, 7).

Similar to the message in this folk tale, the cultural practice of *ubwenge* (which translates as 'wisdom', but has a broader cultural use discussed in article 4) in Rwanda is about revealing and concealing in measured amounts. In my written practice, I am attempting a similar move; revealing enough for my descriptions, interpretations and argumentations to be taken seriously, while concealing what my disciplined intuition estimates that I should conceal. In this aspect of writing, I conceal more than what is common practice in field descriptions of more open settings. But in other aspects, I reveal more than what is considered ethical in older codes of conduct (British Sociological Society 1993; American Anthropological Association 1998). That is, I write about my experiences with sexual harassment and deportation without obtaining informed consent from the people involved in these situations. My reasoning for doing so is reflected in newer codes of conduct, which speak of "weighing competing ethical objectives" (American Anthropological Association 2012), and of waving informed consent "where power is being abused, [meaning] obligations of trust and protection may weigh less heavily" (British Sociological Association 2017). I will discuss the different aspects of weighing competing ethical objectives in the last section of this chapter. The methodological considerations surrounding my sexualized entanglements in the field bring me now to a discussion of my embodied positionality.

Embodied positionality

Receiving feedback on my academic texts, I have often been told that my written practice does not do my embodied positionality justice. You cannot write about sexed entanglements in the field without making your embodied presence appear more clearly in the text, seems to be the underlying logic to this objection. The reason I have not altered my texts to accommodate these comments relates to my theoretical approach to embodied presence, and to how differently this presence has been framed in my field encounters. Drawing on Butler, I contend that my body never appears straightforwardly sexed and sexualized in a certain way. That it is always read according to the context. As also argued by Don Kulick "we can never

know in advance what will 'count' as sexual in another culture" (1995, 7).

Fujii's reflections on her ethnicized positionality is relevant for this discussion. Fujii draws on the many different reactions to her embodied presence in Rwanda and elsewhere to make an argument about the ways in which ethnicity is socially established. Shortly before flying to Rwanda from Belgium, a white woman assumed from her appearance that she knew where Chinatown was. In Rwanda, she was assumed to be half Rwandan on many occasions. Some argued that it was her facial features that made them sure she was Rwandan, some that it was her way of carrying herself, others that it was her pronunciation of Kinyarwanda (2015).

> Why is this important? As a scholar of identity and violence, these lived experiences not only alerted me to a range of ways in which people read and type others; they also taught me that physical features are not objective signs, but that people read faces, bodies, and body language according to local categories and meanings (ibid, 7).

While sexuality, ethnicity, class, gender, able-bodiedness, national belonging and signs of local entanglement clearly matter in research practice, it is often unclear how they matter, and they do not always matter in the same way within the same research context. With respect to his research with children, John Horton writes that he is constantly made self-aware of his masculinity (2008).

> And yet, […] I find making sense of how my positionality matters in/for my research practices 'an extraordinarily difficult thing to do'. Like Owain Jones […] I find 'I cannot easily say'(2005, 215) (ibid, 364).

My inability to say and understand exactly what was going on in my sexualized research encounters is my object of analysis in article 3, where I focus on my troubled relationship with Fred. In my attempts to decipher whether certain communications were about sex or about politics, and my general experience of not knowing whether Rwandan soldiers, bureaucrats and other government employees were trying to spy on me or trying to seduce me, I attempt to illustrate the difficulty of identifying the surfaces of the state.

On being typed

Building up to this argument, this section discusses some of the ways I have been typed, and how they matter for my discussion of sexual entanglements. In a manner similar to how Fujii has been typed as Rwandan in her research encounters based on a variety of different parameters, I have often been typed as Russian. There is a certain ethnicized and sexualized connotation to this typing. Russian women are, in Western popular cinema, often presented as using their sexuality as a weapon, and these images are very present in the Rwandan context as well. Indeed, when I have been asked whether I am from Russia, I have often been told that I come off like the ambiguously situated character played by Angelina Jolie in the movie *Salt*.

In different situations, I have been assumed to be Russian because of the way I look. People have made references to my blue eyes, to my pale skin, and said that they thought I was Russian because Russian women are very beautiful. Upon meeting me for the first time, a young man immediately asked me if I was Russian because I had "squinting cat eyes" that seemed to be taking everything in "like a spy".

Others have asked me whether I was Russian because I am very big, and I "walk like a gangster" or "like a soldier". I once hailed down a moto, who, after we had talked about where I was going, told me "*wanteye ubwoba*", you just scared me. "*Uri munini cyane, kandi uvuga ikinyarwanda neza*", you are very big, and you speak Kinyarwanda well. Fujii describes how her use of a few well-spoken phrases in Kinyarwanda convinced a group of older women in a market that she had to be, not only Rwandan, but a Rwandan with ties to that specific area. In contrast, my use of Kinyarwanda has on some occasions convinced my conversation partners, not that I belong, but that I am someone dangerous, who is here with unclear purposes. It is a common theme in methodology reflections by Rwanda scholars that they have been suspected and/or assumed to be spies or soldiers with secret ties to foreign intelligence services or to Rwandan diaspora opposition parties (Grant 2015b; Purdeková 2015; T. P. Williams 2015; Sundberg 2016). My interest here is in the sexualized aspects of these suspicions, and how they relate to Rwanda's historical and contemporary conceptualizations of female sexuality and intelligence work.

Sexualized tricksters

The colonial encounter with Rwanda was marked by an intense fetishized fascination with tutsi ethnicity (Bale 2002). Tutsi were characterized by anthropologists, missionaries and colonial administrators as having beautiful facial features, resembling those of whites, and as tall and slenderly built. Gerard Prunier cites the missionary Father van den Burgt's comments on the tutsi:

> We can see Caucasian skulls and beautiful Greek profiles side by side with Semitic and even Jewish features, elegant golden-red beauties in the heart of Ruanda and Urundi (Prunier 1995, 9).

The tutsi fetish lead to historical speculations about white origin stories (Sanders 1969), which would later be used by anti-tutsi propaganda to motivate ethnic violence against them. Tutsi women were highly fetishized during both colonial rule and the first and second republic.[36] Kanjogera, the mother of King Yuhi Musinga who ruled from 1896-1944, and one of the most influential political actors in this period, was in her political life consistently described as using her appearance to manipulate her way to success (Codere 1973; Des Forges 2011). Oral histories

[36] A similar point is made by Liisa Malkki in her book about Burundian Hutu refugees. Two of the mythico-histories that she analyzes are entitled: 'Beautiful Tutsi Women as Bait into Servitude' and 'The Death Trap of Tutsi Women's Beauty' (1995, 82–87).

and colonial documents describing her political life rarely emphasize her actions as political but tend to focus on her overwhelming beauty, and how "she invariably charmed all those who met her with her with her dignity, gracious manners, and elegant way of expressing herself" (Cayen 1920; paraphrased by Des Forges 2011, 170). One of Musinga's wives, Nyirakabuga, was similarly attributed politically manipulative powers by the Belgian colonial administrator at Nyanza, Louis Lenaerts, who called her *nzoga komeye*, strong beer, because of her 'charm'[37] (Des Forges 2011, 186).

In the years leading up to the genocide in 1994, various government strategies were directed at producing an image of single urban tutsi women as prostitutes (Jefremovas 1991). Female tutsi employees working in Western embassies were targeted for frequent arrests under this charge. This related to the anti-tutsi propaganda claiming that they were using their positions in the embassies to manipulate donors towards a pro-tutsi agenda (C. C. Taylor 1999). In 1990, the extremist magazine *Kangura* brought a list of Hutu Commandments, the first of which reads:

> Every Muhutu [Hutu male] should know that wherever he finds Umututsikazi [a female Tutsi], she is working for her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result every Muhutu who marries a Mututsikazi, or who takes a Mututsikazi for a mistress, or employs her as a secretary or a protegee is a traitor (cf. ibid, 49).

The vast number of high-ranking members of the MRND government[38] who had tutsi mistresses, thus did not reduce their anti-tutsi sentiments. On the contrary, what was often a fetishized relationship, based on the prestige of being with women attributed more beauty than hutu, resulted in powerful men resenting their tutsi mistresses for their perceived sexual manipulations of them (ibid). In the months before the genocide, the UN too was accused of falling prey to an RPF agenda utilizing tutsi women. In one cartoon, Canadian General, Romeo Dallaire, the head of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Rwanda, was shown in an intimate embrace with two tutsi women.

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[37] "Handsome, witty, bold, and ambitious, she was an excellent example of what people thought of Bega [powerful clan to which both Kanjogera and Nyirakabuga belonged] women—at least in the eyes of those who equated political power with personal presentation" (Des Forges 2011, 185). Notably, Des Forges tends to follow these colonial readings of both Kanjogera's and Nyirakabuga's sexualities and somewhat uncritically reproduces them as ambitious beautiful women who manipulated their way to their sons' successes.

[38] Among them, Habyarimana's brother-in-law, Protais Zigiranyirazo, the prefect of Ruhengeri, who reportedly had a tutsi mistress with whom he had had children (C. C. Taylor 1999, 45).

Cartoon from *Kangura*, no 56, February 1994, page 15, cf. C. C. Taylor 1999, 47.

The caption on the cartoon reads: "General Dallaire and his army have fallen into the trap of fatal women". In another cartoon from December 1993, three Belgian paratroopers are depicted in various sexual acts with two tutsi women (ibid., 48). During the genocide, tutsi women were targeted for gruesome rapes and mutilations as a punishment for their assumed intention of sexual manipulation (ibid; Zraly 2008; Burnet 2012).

In the current political context, which still values intelligence information highly, female sexuality is often framed with a similar focus on its instrumentality. During a paper presentation, where I was commenting on the hypocrisy of soldiers being in charge of educating trainees on Iwawa to avoid prostitutes, when soldiers are among the most frequent customers of sex workers, a Ugandan member of the audience asked me a question concerning the sex workers I had interviewed. Maybe these women were all spies, he suggested, as it is common knowledge that if you want information, you send a woman. In discussions about sex workers among my respondents in Kigali, there was a similar tendency to describe a fluid line between the profession of sex work and of intelligence work. This is especially the case with Rwandan women living in the capitals of neighboring countries, such as Uganda. Discussing the political relations between Rwanda and Uganda, a young man in Kigali stated: "All the Rwandan women living in Kampala are bitches". *Indaya*, which means both 'lose woman' and 'sex worker' (or as Kinyarwanda.net puts it 'whore' and 'prostitute' (kinyarwanda.net, n.d.)), is often translated as 'bitch' by Rwandan English speakers. My conversation partner explained that they were all in one way or another involved in getting information or getting rich by utilizing their Rwandan beauty. This statement recalls the previous government's attitude towards urban women as promiscuous tricksters who use their feminine guiles

against powerful men for political and self-interested purposes.

As I was taking measures to get into contact with sex workers in 2013, the 'fixers' – young men who knew the area and suggested they could help me and my assistant get the right connections – were eager to connect me to a specific woman. This woman was rumored to have the mayor as one of her clients, and, they told us, she could surely give me the most interesting information since she had it straight from the mayor's mouth. Thus, they assumed that I was talking to sex workers, not to hear about their experiences, but as an indirect way to obtain information about the area's powerful men. Finally, the image of tutsi women as sexualized tricksters lives on in parts of Rwanda's exiled hutu diaspora, which share conspiracy theories about *Les Commandos de Charme: Les Femmes Tutsies du Rwanda* (veritasinfo.fr 2012). According to this theory, Kagame maintains his political influence on the African continent and in the world by sending tutsi women to seduce world leaders.

Kamala Visweswaran's discussion of the 'ethnographer as trickster' (1994, 100) emphasizes the ethnographer's deliberate tactics to play with different roles and forms of communication (see also Bohannan 1964; Crapanzano 2009). In contrast, the role of sexualized trickster affords little control to the researcher. In my experience, it was forced on me and made me feel more vulnerable, rather than more in control. As I interpreted my relations with several of the government employees I engaged in my research, they assumed that my intention was to use my sexuality instrumentally to get at their information. They would, for example, invite me out to dinner, so we could discuss my research. I generally declined these invitations, when the sexual connotation was overtly presented. In the case of one ministry employee, who seemed to be sincerely interested in including Iwawa graduates in a policy of distributing materials to young people who had undergone vocational training (something my respondents consistently asked for), and who provided what seemed like a reasonable cause for why we should meet at dinner, I accepted. When he expressed his sexual interest more directly during the dinner, and I rejected him, he was severely angry with me and told me that I owed him something. Referring vaguely to his sense of having gone out of his way, without receiving anything in return, he told me sternly: "you know why you owe me". Because of his sometimes scolding attitude towards me, I also had the distinct impression that Fred felt victimized by his perception of my sexuality. That he felt that I manipulated him in order to get research access, and that he did not have the control over the situation, he wished he had.

Changing positionalities

Among my experiences of being typed as ambiguously situated, the question of whether I am a woman at all has been frequently contended in my field encounters. An older woman with whom I was waiting out a rainstorm stared at me skeptically for some time. I first took her stare as an expression of the skepticism, a number of older Rwandans have toward white people, which is often related to actions and

lack of actions of Europeans and Americans during the 1994 genocide. But after a while she approached me with great openness and said that she was curious to know whether I was a man or a woman. When I answered that I was a woman, she asked me why I walked and dressed like I did. She laughed loudly with the twenty-something other people in the shelter, when she found out that I did not (at that time) have any children, and yet I still thought I was a woman. "*Uri umukobwa*", you are a girl, she informed me with the tone of a teacher correcting a wrong answer on a test.

While I was walking in a valley, one construction worker, working on a house higher up the hill, began catcalling me by saying "Hello baby" in a very soft baby voice. He was, however, interrupted by his colleague, who argued in Kinyarwanda that I was clearly a man. They continued arguing as I was walking away, shouting at me to make me turn around, something I had no patience for that day. When I was stepping off a moto another day, a pedestrian began a drunken, sexually charged call: "*Eeeey! Muzu-*…", but stopped mid-*muzungu* ('white person' in Kinyarwanda), hesitated and asked the driver of the bike I was getting off: "*Ni umuhungu, se?"* – is it a boy? The same question was posed by several older people in rural areas to my research assistant in 2013-2014.

Perhaps a good way to end this section is by discussing a final example of the complex situatedness of my body in the field. In 2014, I was walking home from the gym on a street in Kigali, which usually had street lights turned on in the dark, but that day did not. I saw a dark figure lying and shaking alone on the side walk. I could not see any other people in the vicinity, and the figure turned out to be a man who appeared to be having a seizure or an epileptic attack. Struggling to remember what I had learned about first aid, I felt like I knew that a person in these circumstances had to be placed in recovery position, and that there was a certain way to place a person in this position. But my panicked mind could not access this information properly, and I ended up simply lifting his body from the side walk, and placing him down on the side, while holding him to make sure that he did not turn over in case he had to vomit.

He weighed very little, and he had that smell about him that a lot of men who live on the streets have. A smell of dirt and sweat that have been so layered onto the body that the smell is not sharp and pungent but rather on a lower note of smells. Like base is to treble in music. A smell that gives the impression that the person does not eat a lot, and that a good portion of his caloric intake comes from alcohol. The smell reminded me of how a number of the men, I had interviewed about Iwawa, smelled. Like I had lifted this man, I venture that I could have lifted a good portion of my Iwawa respondents, who similarly did not have my access to good nutrition.

As I was holding down this man on his side, a young white man came walking by quickly, and told me without stopping to hurry away from the streets because they were not safe. Shortly after, a moto with a passenger came driving by. I waived them down, and they helped and talked to the man, who was now conscious. The

passenger gave the man my gym water and offered to help him get home. The man rejected the offer, and after having sit on the sidewalk for a few moments, he stood up and walked away from the road.

The point I want to make here is simple, yet merits attention in a discussion of female bodies as vulnerable in fieldwork. My body is not inherently vulnerable to male bodies in Rwanda because it is weaker than these bodies, or because a "hetero-patriarchal society" (Kloß 2016, 398) privileges them. Not all male bodies are privileged in Rwanda, at least not in the sense of access to nutrition and physical strength. It is differences in "techniques of the body" (Mauss 1973, 70) that mattered in my relations with my Iwawa respondents as men who could potentially harm me. That is, some of these men knew well and described to me techniques of harming women and other men. My ability to lift them would hardly matter, if I had been in a situation where they actually wanted to harm me. Prior to my fieldwork, I have often been cautioned by other researchers to be very careful while doing fieldwork with men who live on the street. Yet, I have hardly ever experienced the sexual approaches by my respondents from Iwawa as a big problem in my research practice, because I could always withdraw from the situation. When I analyze my difficulty of handling an Iwawa graduate's expression of sexual interest in article 2, the difficulty did not relate to a sense of threat. Rather, I interpret my respondent Daniel's expression of love and desire, and his pleas for me to love him back, as related to his sense of threat after having exposed himself in the interview. This aspect speaks to the power inequality of the interview, where the research relation made Daniel feel vulnerable. Simultaneously, such a situation has the potential to develop into a threat for the researcher. Daniel never gave me the impression that he was not going to respect my boundaries, but other situations, where a respondent feels like he needs to be absolved and loved by the researcher, could develop differently. However, the sexual harassment, that became a major obstacle to my research, came from a much more well-situated person, whose influence on whether I was able to do research at all made it feel like an impossibility to withdraw from the relationship.

In some of the discussions about sexual harassment in field work, I argue that there is a need to increase focus on the "quality of relations" (Narayan 1993, 671). As part of debates about ethnized positionalities, Kirin Narayan argues that every anthropologist exhibits a "multiplex subjectivity" (Narayan 1993, 681). Drawing on this perspective, I argue that what matters in sexualized field encounters are the specific relations at play, not the inherent vulnerability of the female body. This analytical move brings me to my discussion of the use of autoethnography as method.

Autoethnography

As reflected in the sections above, writing about failures and other forms of "revelatory moments" (Trigger, Forsey, and Meurk 2012, 513) in fieldwork,

involves autoethnographic engagement. In the characterization of Ellis et al., autoethnography consists of retrospectively and selectively writing about epiphanies that happened during fieldwork and thereby strive to produce aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experiences. In this way, "autoethnography is both process and product" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011).

The method proposed by autoethnographers resembles the account I make in article 3 of learning from failures by reading them together with patterns of cultural experience evidenced by field notes, interviews, and other sources. When it comes to describing these patterns, autoethnography uses tenets of storytelling and changes in authorial voice, among other practices of communicating, commonly associated with fictional writing. With these practices, the autoethnographer tries to communicate the meaningfulness of personal experience and to make cultural experience evocative (hooks 1994). As argued by Deborah Reed-Danahay, it thereby "opens up new ways of writing about social life" (1997, 2–3).

Autoethnographic style and validity

In this way, the style of writing in autoethnography matters. The purpose of the personal voice is in part to "transform readers and transport them" (Spry 2001, 713) to a place of critical reflection. Style has been proposed by several practitioners of autoethnography as a response to common criticisms against the method. Autoethnographers are criticized for doing too little fieldwork, for not observing enough members of the culture under research, and for spending too little time with their research participants (Buzard 2003; Fine 2003; Delamont 2009). Furthermore, in using personal experience, autoethnographers have been argued to use biased data (Anderson 2006; Atkinson 1997; Gans 1999), and have been described as navel gazers who get lost in themselves and cannot see important aspects of what is going on 'out there' (Madison 2006). Geertz offers one form of response to this type of criticism. He argues that the purpose of emphasizing reflexivity is not introspection. The meaningfulness of reflexivity, he argues, comes from its role in making powerful ethnographic texts.

> negotiating the passage from what one has been through "out there" to what one says "back here," is not psychological in character. It is literary. It arises for anyone who adopts what one may call, in a serious pun, the I-witnessing approach to the construction of cultural descriptions. […] [It] is to pose for yourself a distinctive sort of text-building problem: rendering your account credible through rendering your person so. […] To become a convincing "I-witness," one must, so it seems, first become a convincing "I." (Geertz 1988, 78–79).

If the use of autoethnography in this thesis makes my 'I' more convincing, it is in a slightly different sense, I believe. In describing my insecurities and doubts in making 'I-witness' accounts, I emphasize that I was not sure about what I was witnessing.

It is this uncertainty that informs my analytical take on incoherence and disorder in other examples of the work of the state in Rwanda. If my use of 'I' becomes convincing, it is because I convincingly connect my inability to clearly I-witness with the inabilities of others, in this way making a compelling argument in favor of including more mess and confusion in accounts of the state in Rwanda. This use is inspired by Ahmed's preference for "the messiness of the experiental" (2017, 542), recalling her argument in favor of examining how distinctions are established, rather than taking them for granted.

Ellis et al. offer another form of response to critics of autoethnography. They argue that when the term 'validity' is applied to this practice, the context, meaning and utility change. In contrast to correspondence as a measure of validity, autoethnography poses questions like: "How useful is the story?" and "To what uses might the story be put?" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). In this thesis, I put my autoethnographic stories to the use of discussing the destructive potential of emotions as well as the often inscrutable agendas of the state. Moreover, I aim to draw the reader in to get a sense of the mode of being, I analyze in my discussion of political subjectivity. This practice relates to Ken Plummer's argument that "[w]hat matters is the way in which the story enables the reader to enter the subjective world of the teller—to see the world from her or his point of view, even if this world does not 'match reality'" (2014, 401). Carey characterizes a similar form of communication practiced by his respondents in the Moroccan High Atlas, where the point of the story is plausibility rather than correspondence (2017).

In his discussion of academic style, James Miller engages Adorno's comparison of his way of writing to "spider webs". "He hoped to snare readers in a tightly woven net of metaphors and ideas" (J. Miller 2000), Miller claims. Moreover, Miller contextualizes Adorno's critique of "plain talk" (ibid) as related to what may be termed his personal pathology. Miller seems to argue that Adorno raged against making academia easily accessible as a result of his personal failure to engage with his social surroundings in California. Rather than conclude that this takes away from Adorno's argument, I would argue that being exposed to certain forms of violence and exclusions, and having this personal imprint come across in academic text, constitutes a meaningful form of communicating this violence. Texts that are more explicit about using this methodology than Adorno's, in my opinion, constitute some of the most powerful examples of social analysis at all (e.g. Améry 1980; Brison 2003; Mujawayo and Belhaddad 2006). This method builds to my argument in article 3 in favor of research that hurts. Yes, using Miller's framing, I am hoping to 'snare' the reader by weaving a spider web of phenomena, and making you feel that they can be read together as politics of patience. But rather than view snaring as less academic than plain talk, I argue that it can be seen as embodied cognition (Spry 2001). Article 1, however, might read as an exception to this academic aesthetic, because it is co-authored and written as part of a special issue with the objective of theoretically discussing the character of different enclosed spaces.

From the perspective of embodied cognition, the text as menacing, disturbing or

thrilling is part of learning about the context described. In the phrasing of Lloyd Goodall, writing "should be dangerous. It should mess with your mind" (1998, 5, cf. Spry 2001, 725). In a similar vein, Ruth Behar responds to the charge that autoethnography is navel-gazing that

> [e]fforts at self-revelation flop not because the personal voice has been used, but because it has been poorly used, leaving unscrutinized the connection, intellectual and emotional, between the observer and the observed. Vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake (2012, 13–14).

With this added emphasis on the scrutinized connection between the researcher self and her relation to the field, comes added ethical concerns about anonymity. It is with these concerns in mind, I characterize my approach as guarded auto-ethnography.

Guarded autoethnography

The objectives of autoethnographical methodology and methodologies of closed contexts have certain tensions between them. As noted by many proponents of autoethnography, it is more difficult to ensure research participant's anonymity when they are identified as having a close personal relationship to the researcher (Ellis 2007). Yet, anonymity is highly significant for researching and writing about closed contexts. The methods proposed by autoethnographers, for example of a son presenting his mother with his account of their relation before publication (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011), does not do much to remove ethical tension when the research concerns violence. There is more at stake than personal feelings of hurt due to publication. Thus, as argued above, I keep reflexivity about many aspects of my entanglement in the field out of my written academic practice. In this way, my use of autoethnography is selective, and I use the term guarded autoethnography to describe it. Guarded autoethnography cannot always provide transparency about the details of knowledge production. It can offer glimpses of reflexivity, selected moments, I consider pregnant with meaning. Although I am not writing about my family relations, Ellis et al.'s contention that auto-ethnographers "also have to be able to continue to live in the world of relationships in which their research is embedded after the research is completed" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011) is relevant for my relation to my research context.

Guarded autoethnography may be captured well by Kathryn Stockton's argument in favor of writing reflexivity as a kind of 'opaque personal confession' (Stockton 1994). In Lather's reading, this practice amounts to "personal writing that is scandalous, excessive and leaky but based in lack and ruin rather than plenitude" (Lather 2000a, 22). The reader may be left with a lot of questions regarding the details of my different field entanglements. With regards to many of these

questions, I follow Visweswaran in defending the virtue of "a failed account"[39] (1994, 100), one that is explicit about the impossibility of full comprehension and full representation.

> If the response to a partial account is inevitably the demand for a fuller one, to refuse such a desire is immediately to jeopardize one's status as ethnographer. To counter the request for more information, I usually pose the question of returning to the library (ibid, 101).

Given that I speak from a place of less academic confidence than Visweswaran, I respond to the request for more information by having gone to the library myself, and by having included material that I argue add context to my failed accounts.

Dyadic interviews and layered accounts

My specific uses of autoethnography in this thesis may be termed dyadic interviews and layered accounts. Dyadic interviews are the subjects of my analysis in article 2 (although the article does not refer to them in this way). Dyadic interviews "focus on the interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics of the interview itself" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011), what Fujii calls "meta-data" (Fujii 2010, 232). Meta-data, to Fujii, represent, for example, the dynamics that caused her respondents to contradict themselves or tell her outright lies that they were likely to know she would be able to identify as lies. While the focus in dyadic interviews is on the interviewee, and the story she is telling, the thoughts and feelings of the researcher are included in interpretations of the interview. My experiences are not the main focus in article 2, but my personal reflection form part of the context to the story being told about my interviewees (see also Ellis 2004). The article analyzes the emotional changes during my interviews, my own and those of my respondents with a view to examine the forms of violence, the interviews concerned. That is, how violence works in the subject and the ways in which the symbolic and experienced violence of the interview situation may come to resemble this violence.

The concept 'layered accounts' (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011) fits the overall approach of this thesis. Within this form of autoethnography, the author's experience is interpreted together with other forms of data, abstract analysis, and relevant literature. In layered accounts, existing research serves as a "source of *questions* and *comparisons*" and not exclusively as a "measure of truth" (Charmaz 1983, 110).[40] Thus, in my engagement with existing literature on subjects relevant for this thesis' discussion, I draw on the empirical material presented, for example, Nzahabwanayo's research concerning *itorero* wherein "the vast majority of

[39] Which reads as the form of knowledge, Foucault termed "insufficiently elaborated" (Foucault 2003, 7).

[40] Charmaz is discussing grounded theory, but the phrasing is helpful for layered accounts.

participants emphasize that in many training sites, trainers sexually abuse young girls" (Nzahabwanayo 2016, 224–25). Moreover, I discuss the analytical framings in these texts as a source of questioning and discussing the forms of sovereignty, subjectivity, and violence at stake in their and my research. Layered accounts use vignettes, reflexivity and introspection to invoke readers to enter into the "emergent experience" (Ronai 1992, 123) of doing and writing research. Using layered accounts, this thesis thus attempts the dual academic performance of relating my personal experiences to other forms of data in order to undertake critical abstract analysis and of using autoethnographic style to produce research that hurts. Part of my effort to produce this form of discomfort consists of problematizing certain uses of empathy and informed consent in field research.

Problematizing empathy and informed consent

James Clifford has argued that the practice of empathy has been recognized as central to participant observation "[s]ince Malinowski's time" (2008, 13). It has been described as an antidote to "the moral blindness associated with older, positivist, colonial" (Capper 2003, 234) research traditions. What is meant by the term, however, is not always specified (Watson 2009). A notable exception is Douglas Hollan and Jason Throop's 'anthropology of empathy', wherein they characterize "a type of reasoning in which a person emotionally resonates with the experience of another while simultaneously attempting to imaginatively view a situation from that other person's perspective" (2011, 2). While engaging with the lives of others is central to ethnographic research, which would seem to imply that empathetic engagement would then be central too, empathy has come under criticism from a number of angles. Cate Watson, for example, argues that many uses empathy in field research work from the assumption that empathy between the researcher and researched will result in better, meaning 'richer' or 'deeper', research data (2009). Continuing poststructuralist critiques of the search for authenticity, she argues that:

> In this context empathy, as epistemological principle, becomes a tool for achieving greater scientific objectivity so that, 'we can accomplish something which is never attainable in the natural sciences, namely the subjective understanding of the action of the component individuals' (Weber 1968, 15) (ibid, 106).

Where Clifford locates empathy on the side of the non-positivist part of participant observation, Watson argues that it is often used instrumentally to get at the imagined 'real meaning' of respondents' actions. A related line of critique is posed by Joost Van Loon, who accuses ethnographic practices of empathetic engagement of having "totalitarian tendencies" (Van Loon 2007, 280). By this he means that in the quest to be seen as legitimate ethnographers who have truly understood their respondents, the former subsumes the experiences of the latter in the categories

they themselves use to understand the world. Elizabeth Ellsworth raises similar concerns, when she speaks against empathy as "the beautiful fit" (Ellsworth 1997, cf. Lather 2000a, 19). Instead, she advocates counter-practices of queering, disidentifying, denaturalizing, and defamiliarizing.

Empathy in closed contexts

My path to problematize empathetic engagement in field encounters came through my inability to arrive at comfortable field relations through this engagement. Article 2 problematizes empathetic engagement, specifically with regards to researching contexts marked by violence. In methodological discussions about navigating the closed context that is Rwanda, it has been argued that researchers need to invest sufficient time to gain the trust of their respondents (Ingelaere 2010a; Thomson, Ansoms, and Murison 2012; Sundberg 2016; Loyle 2016; Bognitz 2018). In these texts, authors argue that initial research engagements with sensitive subjects is likely to produce only 'the official' version of 'ordinary Rwandans' perspectives on them. By getting involved in the everyday lives of Rwandans, the researcher is more likely to get to the real opinions of real Rwandans. These characterizations read as exponents of the tendency in ethnographic methodology to describe a rite of passage from a position where the researcher is not trusted, to a full and comfortable inclusion in a trusted forum where respondents share their beliefs openly, a tendency which Cecilie Verma has criticized (2013). Illustrating the untenability of this characterization, she shows how, after doing more than three years of fieldwork in Northern Uganda, she was still often met with suspicion and mistrust from the people she worked with. Konstantin Belousov et al. take the argument further and contend that in "crisis-ridden research settings" (Belousov et al. 2007, 156), trust between researcher and researched may actually decrease over time (see also Fujii 2010).

Doing research in violent or closed contexts, article 2 argues for heightened critical attention to the unintended effects of empathetic engagement. As Sommer (1994) notes, these arguments are both epistemological and ethical. They concern the limits of our ability to feel what others feel and understand 'their point of view'. But they are also, importantly, about what we "ought not to assume we have the right to know" (paraphrased in Lather 2000a, 19). Here we engage an underlying problem for the practice of ethnography more broadly, which is that in trying to understand people, we also expose them (Boesten and Henry 2018). This problem motivates Edward Said's critique of Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*.

> [A]lthough Scott presents a brilliant empirical as well as theoretical account of everyday resistances to hegemony, he too undercuts the very resistance he admires and respects by in a sense revealing the secrets of its strength (Said 1989, 220).

When long term ethnographic empathetic engagement is used to extract secrets,

that would otherwise not have been shared, do we have a right to these secrets? My framing here is polemical, although the texts about Rwanda, I reference above, in no way exhibit this form of deliberate attempt at emotional manipulation. But our analytical framings matter, and the notion that researchers need to spend enough time with respondents for them to spill their secrets is problematic in a context where 'control [often] means life or death' (Løvgren 2018). As argued by Lisa Malkii, in relation to her fieldwork with Burundian refugees in Tanzania:

> the success of the fieldwork hinged not so much on a determination to ferret out 'the facts' as on a willingness to leave some stones unturned, to listen to what my informants deemed important, and to demonstrate my trustworthiness by not prying where I was not wanted (1995, 51).

When I follow Malkki in arguing in favor of leaving stones unturned, it relates to my theoretical contention that the search for hidden transcripts as opposed to the public transcript is an unhelpful binary distinction. Following Verma, I moreover argue that we should hesitate to consider ourselves fully trusted. Even if a researcher is or has come to be considered fully integrated in a context, the context we are talking about is one wherein children are encouraged in schools to report their parents if they see them act suspiciously, resulting in one of Purdeková's respondents stating that "Rwandans do not trust each other" (2015, 119). Here, being guarded should not be treated as an obstacle to be overcome, so that the researcher may fully enter "the "terribly closed" (de Lame 2005, 14) world of Rwandan citizens" (Thomson 2011b, 441), by "moving behind the official discourse" (Bouka 2013, 107). As it has been framed in my research encounters, guardedness often constitutes an essential survival tactic, and this critical moral awareness should inform our engagements with it.

Rwanda's political context, which is full of confessional practices, is another reason why researchers should reflect critically on their practices of getting closer to the real story about Rwandans by drawing out their secrets. One of the ways, in which the RPF state transgresses, is by forcing people to confess in a variety of ways. In *gacaca*, where close to two million people have passed in front of local courts involving the whole community, people have routinely been made to tell and retell painful stories in front of a large audience, commonly with retraumatizing effects (Brouneus 2010; Nyirubugara 2013). Iwawa graduation ceremonies and media engagements with the center always include 'testimonies' from young men, who confess to how they used to be in bad ways and how they have reformed (NYC 2016). The nationwide program, called *Ndi Umumunyarwanda*, I am Rwandan, has moreover required 'confessions' from everyone of hutu ethnicity on behalf of the role of their ethnic group in the genocide (Blackie and Hitchcott 2018). Within this political context, research participants may not always have a strong sense of being able to decline an invitation to tell their story when it comes from a representative of authority. Whereas some have framed the challenge of doing research in Rwanda as a matter of allowing otherwise silenced "alternative views" (Reyntjens 2016, 74)

to be heard, I argue that we need to moderate our desire to draw such views out of people. As researchers in Rwanda, we are navigating a situation marked simultaneously by silencing and too much talk. In article 2, I analyze an interview where I, in the situation, interpreted Josephine's urgent retelling of events as her desire to share a story that she could not easily share with those around her. I still believe that there is something right in this interpretation. In some cases, people may have a strong sense of carrying their own version of a story, which it is clear in the current political context that they cannot share. Chakravarty, for example, give many examples of hutu experiencing RPF "silencing" (Chakravarty 2016a, 188) of their views on history during *gacaca* trials (see also Jessie 2017). But Josephine (and my other respondents) may also have felt obliged to share the story, as Rwandans in many situations have been obliged to talk about their experiences. As has been remarked elsewhere (Uvin 2001; Loyle 2016), Rwanda is an intensely researched country. As such, claims on the stories of Rwandans are being made by a variety of state and international actors. Empathetic research engagement in closed contexts may be intended as a way to understand and 'give voice' to those who are silenced. But it has the potential to further extractive and exposing relations to our research participants (see also Boesten and Henry 2018).

Empathy revised

My argument then, is not against fieldwork ethics informed by empathy. It is against some of its uncritical uses. Empathy does not inevitably lead to exposing our respondents, or a totalitarian consumption into a mirroring relationship. A specific uncritical practice has this potential. Critically informed empathy can be framed as an attitude of openness. Catherine Besteman develops a concept, she terms 'ethnographic love', comprising of "an openness to self-transformation and to the changes in intersubjectivity that happen over time. It insists on moral reflexivity, a critical moral awareness that shapes and defines the ethnographic encounter" (2015, 33). Article 2 does not reach a concrete answer to what critical moral awareness would mean in the context of interviews about violence, but simply offers my reflections as inspiration for future ethical navigations. One way to practice critical moral awareness could be to encourage researcher hesitation and the practice of leaving more stones unturned.

During the time I have lived in Rwanda, I have on many occasions barged into a bathroom stall because it was unlocked but found a person in there who obviously did not welcome my presence. Based on my cultural background, I saw the unlocked doors as a sign that I could enter. Meanwhile many people in Rwanda are not used to having the option of locking doors to bathroom stalls. Instead they pay attention to other indicators that the stall may be occupied. Using the bathroom stall as a metaphor, critical moral awareness in Rwanda may include learning to identify subtle indicators that researcher presence is not wanted and a slower opening of the door, even if it is unlocked. Respecting such indicators, I argue,

includes being more hesitant in our search for secrets about the real Rwanda. Within this view, spending longer periods of time in the field is not done to get closer and closer to research participants, as researchers and researched come to trust and empathize with each other, and share their true stories. Spending longer periods in the field would be done to learn how to better navigate the ethical terrain of the field, and to increase the researcher's ability to recognize the stones to be left in peace.

With respect to textual representation, Lather uses Gilles Deleuze to redirect qualitative research from empathy to 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983).

> Hence what I attempt here is not so much 'against' empathy, voice and authenticity as it is a double economy of the text to counter-balance the leveling effects of assimilation into sameness (Lather 2000a, 22).

The double economy, and what Ellsworth refers to as counter-practices of disidentifying and defamiliarizing, I argue, tend to play out on their own in field encounters marked by transgression, disgust, and guilt among other negative emotions (see also Visweswaran 1994; Gable 2014). Besteman's account of ethnographic love is very open, and its insistence on moral reflexivity and changes in intersubjectivity makes it possible to maintain the value of this attitude within difficult field encounters. In other words, Besteman's ethnographic love can also be used to examine field relations marked by antipathy. It is in relation to certain forms of difficult field encounters that I problematize privileging informed consent over other ethical objectives.

Informed consent and symbolic violence

Informed consent can be defined as either a document or a conversation which "includes sharing with potential participants the research goals, methods, funding sources or sponsors, expected outcome, anticipated impacts of the research, and the rights and responsibilities of research participants" (American Anthropological Association 2012), and which ends in the participant's consent. Informed consent, both in its idealized and practical forms, has been criticized from different directions (e.g. Bosk and De Vries 2004; J. Hamilton 2006; Connor, Copland, and Owen 2017; Mapedzahama and Dune 2017). For example, research involving people in desperate situations cannot always secure that research participants have "freely granted consent" (American Anthropological Association 2012), as they may be motivated to participate by the hope of some additional benefit in spite of the researcher's clarifications (Fujii 2012). My critique of informed consent takes a different direction, as I argue that in "weigh[ing] competing ethical obligations due collaborators and affected parties" (American Anthropological Association 2012) informed consent should not always take precedence. To introduce this argument, I here examine one of my field encounters which engages both my troubled

relationship with the guardedness of my respondents and the question of informed consent.

As I was walking with a couple of young men after a research interview, one of my respondents, Isaac, started feeling more at ease and uplifted by thinking about the times spent in one of the Rwandan civic education camps. The camps are run by military authorities and consist partly of the physical conditioning part of military training. Isaac was reminiscent of the camaraderie and the sense of purpose he had felt while at the camp, but he also came to think of some of the practices differently and more critically now that they were no longer surrounded by the self-evidence they held in the military. He came to think of a song they used to sing in the camp and started singing parts of it. It was about how there are people with ugly faces, and how the 'we' of the song will stay on top of the hills, while those with the ugly faces can fight the battles in the valleys. Rwanda is often referred to as 'the land of a thousand hills' (de Lame 2005), and in this topography it is a military advantage to be placed on the top of hills, whereas armies or military units placed in the valleys are more exposed, and their soldiers more likely to be killed in battle by shots or granates fired from uphill. It was understood in the context that 'the people with ugly faces' referred to hutu. Hutu in general have experienced systematic discrimination under the RPF government (Des Forges 1999; Ingelaere 2010b; Vandeginste 2014; S. Turner 2014; Eramian 2015; Chakravarty 2016a). The 'we' in the song referred to tutsi, those with beautiful faces. Rwanda's civic education camps are part of RPF's politics of unity as a reconciliation strategy after the genocide. The often repeated mantra is that Rwanda has eradicated all traces of ethnically divisive thinking, and the constitution has caused it to be in practice illegal to refer to ethnicity since 2003 (MININFRA 2015; Amnesty International 2010).

The tension between the politics of unity and the song referring to the people with ugly faces was not lost on Isaac. He remembered the time spent singing that and other military songs with fondness, but as we were walking, he came to ask himself out loud how it must have felt for the hutu in that situation. He contrasted with his words and body language how high and empowered he had felt with how frightened he now imagined the hutu must have felt. As we were approaching the destination where we would part ways, I asked him if he would one day repeat the lyrics to me, because I would like to use them in my research. He told me no and changed his tone and the state of relaxation he had just been in. No, because he did not agree with what I was trying to do with my research, he said. RPF was not perfect, but there was too much at stake in the country for the government to be exposed to criticism. As he understood my position, I was too critically inclined to properly understand the vision of RPF. Moreover, I, as an outsider, could not understand it because I had not lived through what he had lived through. Firstly, being tutsi, the ethnic group targeted in the 1994 genocide, and secondly, the lived experience of the military camp, which changed him for the better, he said.

While doing research in Rwanda, I shifted back and forth between two senses of

failure. Professional failure of not being able to establish trust and rapport with my respondents, and ethical failure in the form of guilt for having established rapport and making my respondents expose themselves in a way that they would regret afterwards. I felt guilty for having broken the trust Isaac had just shown me with my greedy research interests and having disturbed a social bond with a person, I had a lot of sympathy for. But Isaac was not the only person involved in the situation.

One of the young men we were walking with was of hutu ethnicity, I will refer to him as Jean. While Isaac was singing his facial expression was blank, and he was staring straight into the air. Whereas Isaac seemed for the first time to start questioning whether the song was discriminative, Jean did not seem surprised or curious about the song's lyrics. He gave no indication about his stance towards such a song but seemed tense. Given Rwanda's political context, I read this reaction as his way of dealing with a form of discrimination that he had faced multiple times before. Although his emotional life was not transparent to me, his ethnic group was sung about with joy as people, who are both ugly and whose lives are expendable, and it seemed more than likely that he had experienced treatment like this before. My presence as a researcher, who was trying to dig into a topic that might eventually expose him to violence from government authorities, I believe, is another factor that put him under pressure. Using knowledge about Rwanda's political context to 'discipline my intuition' (Trigger, Forsey, and Meurk 2012), I did not feel that I could ask Jean about whether he knew the song, or what he felt about it, let alone ask for his consent to give me its lyrics if he knew them. I interpreted his tense behavior as that of a man in need of being given peace and the freedom to leave the situation.

In this situation, Isaac was both a man, who through my engagement with him had been made to let down his guard and expose something, he afterwards regretted, *and* he was a powerful stakeholder, who felt he should be allowed to control what forms of information should form part of my research. This story is in a significant way his, and as such, I have reason to respect his denial of consent. But in a significant way, it is also Jean's. If it is, as I have reason to believe, also a song commonly sung in military settings in Rwanda, the song moreover belongs to many more people than those two. In the ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association, it is argued that "where power is being abused, obligations of trust and protection may weigh less heavily" (British Sociological Association 2017). But what abuses of power count most in this encounter? Was it my abuse of my friendly relation with Isaac, or was it Isaac's, when he decided to act on behalf of the RPF state and deny that this information could be shared? As is reflected in my choice to include the story, I take the significance of the symbolic violence, which reflects actual violence, against Jean and other hutu more serious than I do Isaac's regret that he said something, which unwittingly placed RPF in a bad light. In this way, I take inspiration from Lather, who argues that although she wants to trouble ethnographic tropes of realism, she remains "haunted" (Lather 2000b, 302)

by the feminist commitment of doing justice to her subjects' words and needs. With respect to the phenomena I analyze in this thesis, I aim to trouble notions of a uniform and clearly defined state ruled by a powerful elite against a polarly opposed and clearly defined population subjected to the state's violent initiatives. Nevertheless, there are clearly groups of people among my research participants who are more intensely and continuously exposed to violence than others. My written practice too is haunted by a desire to do these people justice. Lather and Visweswaran argue that the poststructuralist demands to dislocate coherent narratives that "explain it all" (ibid), and the feminist demand of giving voice to marginalized groups are not incompatible (see also Schrock 2013). Visweswaran frames the practice as hinging on "the supposition that we can 'give voice' and the knowledge that we can never fully" (Visweswaran 1994, 100; see also Spivak 1990). In the example above, I override the ethical objective of informed consent because it clashed with the ethical concern of giving (imperfect) voice. With respect to sexual harassment and deportation, I prioritize informed consent less out of an ethical concern for myself and an ethical obligation to other researchers who have found or will find themselves in similar conditions. While my experiences of sexual harassment are not equivalent to those of the girls and women in Rwanda who experience abuse from representatives of the state (T. P. Williams, Binagwaho, and Betancourt 2012; Nzahabwanayo 2016), I am also motivated by my perception that the state as a sexual transgressor in Rwanda deserves further attention. Given the prevalence of sexual harassment in field accounts from all over the world, I moreover argue that it is important to have critical and nuanced discussions about the subject. If we maintain that field research is a worthwhile activity, self-care in relation to sexual harassment and other ways in which the field hurts (see for example Kondo 1986; Figley 1995; K. Connolly and Reilly 2007; Harrowell, Davies, and Disney 2017) should inform our research practices. Writing about some of these field experiences without consent is part of practicing such self-care and may serve as inspiration for future researchers preparing for field research.

Summary

The methodological approach of this thesis draws on my first fieldwork in Rwanda concerning Iwawa Island and my second attempted and failed fieldwork. By using other forms of data and reading them with an 'ethnographic stance' (Ortner 1995) and commitment to thick description, I contextualize my autoethnographic experiences of uncertainty and failure in order to speak to concepts of sovereignty and subjectivity. Doing research in closed contexts produces multiple practical and ethical challenges for fieldwork. In this chapter, I have discussed the question of distance between researchers and the subjects studied in closed contexts. When contexts are closed it complicates the possibility of 'being there' (Hannerz 2003) to study phenomena close up and my fragmented material reflects this. But in contexts marked by closure and violence, there is, I have argued, some ethical value

to distance. In Matthew Carey's ethnographic theory of mistrust, he characterizes mistrusting people as finding it immoral to speculate about and seek to know the inner lives of others (2017). On a similar note, article 2 will present my critical reflections about the unintended consequences of empathetic engagement in 'unleashing interviews'. Such engagement may easily be experienced as invasive. Thus, research in closed contexts requires continued reflection about the changing conditions of power and powerlessness for both the researcher and those under research. Which forms of power should our research oppose by trying to give voice to those subjected to it and which forms of powerlessness should cause us to moderate our desire to give voice and expose? The reflections I have discussed in this chapter illustrate that these are questions we may keep posing to ourselves in the ongoing exercise that is ethical navigation in- and outside of 'the field' (Fujii 2012), and that it is not always easy to identify the answers.

As part of my discussions about reflexivity, I have engaged aspects about my embodied positionality. With an emphasis on sexual harassment in fieldwork, I described my sense of being forced into a role of sexualized trickster and being treated as if I was deliberately using my sexuality to obtain information. In this way, my arguments are part of newer strains in methodology discussions, which argue for attention to the vulnerability of the researcher as well as the researched. With my analytical focus on my own experiences, I draw on autoethnogaphic methods. For example, the autoethnographic contention that producing viscerally effective texts is a meaningful way to produce knowledge about a research context. Due to ethical considerations concerning research in closed contexts, my use of personal context, however, is selective, and I have termed it guarded autoethnography. More broadly, I withhold contextual information in a number of descriptions as part of my aim to ensure the anonymity of those involved in my research practice.

4. 'Winning life' and the discipline of death at Iwawa Island (article 1)

Abstract

This article analyses Iwawa, a rehabilitation centre for 'delinquent' young men in Rwanda. Like prisons, detention centres and refugee camps elsewhere, Iwawa is both a place of nurture and abandonment; of improving life and disallowing it. We argue that in order to grasp these tensions, we might pay attention to the role of death in disciplining those who are confined. A common way for these young men to address their experience was to say that they had to 'win life', and that those who did not win life would often die. Death as a possibility animates life in the camp and explains how the camp is at once a place of abandonment and improvement. The possibility of death also creates hierarchies in the camp between those who win and those who lose; those who become ideal developmental subjects of the Rwandan state and those who do not.

Key Words: Death, camp, liminality, animals, discipline, Rwanda.

Introduction

Since February 2010, the Government of Rwanda has run a rehabilitation centre for male youth on the otherwise uninhabited Iwawa Island in Lake Kivu, separating Rwanda from Congo. According to the Rwandan authorities, the centre treats drug and alcohol abuse and provides six months of moral rehabilitation and six months of vocational skills training for young men termed 'delinquent' (MYICT 2012). It hosts around 2000 men at a time for periods of 1-3 years. Apart from drug use, delinquency refers, for example, to homelessness, street vending and lack of attendance in public meetings. Some have been arrested in 'general operations' where police and military personnel clear the streets for people unable to show an identity card. Others have been turned in to the police by members of their family, commonly due to drug abuse. Moral rehabilitation at Iwawa includes psychological counseling, intensive physical military training, civic education about Rwanda's history and the initiatives and ideologies of the current government, and physical activities like gymnastics and karate. Through these activities, Iwawa attempts to transform young men on the margins of Rwandan society into disciplined, patriotic citizens. However, death and the consistent threat of death were recurring themes in the narratives of the men who had graduated from Iwawa. In some narratives, death occurred from lack of care – such as when trainees were left to starve to death

or die from snakebites in the forests of Iwawa. Other deaths seemed to occur from the sheer intensity of disciplining; trainees died from exhaustion due to the military physical regiment or from being beaten to death by instructors who wanted them to improve their attitudes.

Musa, a graduate[41] from Iwawa, argued that in undergoing rehabilitation "you are living with death".

Rose:	*How do you mean, you live with death?*
Musa:	Because it is a course, and in a course, there are the winners and the losers.
Rose:	*The winners and the losers?*
Musa:	There are the winners who try to overcome the courses, and those who fail, die.

In Musa's conceptualization, death permeates discipline. Rather than arguing that the ever existing presence of death on the island is about 'abandonment' (Agamben 1998), he explains it as a result of the course as a disciplining practice. Many of the men interviewed for this article used expressions like "I struggled to win life" and "it is easy to lose your life there" to describe their efforts to survive rehabilitation. By exploring the work of death in organizing and transforming life at Iwawa, this article elaborates on the general tensions found in spaces of confinement between nurturing and disallowing life. The tension between care and abandonment, we argue, is central to understanding carceral spaces in general, as may be seen in other contributions to this special issue (Povinelli 2019; Agier 2019). Political education camps, refugee camps and prisons have often been analyzed as spaces of transformation akin to ritual spaces, that attempt to transform the inhabitants from one subject state to another (S. Turner 2010; Verma 2013; Sundberg 2014; Purdeková 2015). Other camps have been characterized as spaces of abandonment where subjects are exposed to the unmitigated sovereign power of death, such as the Nazi concentration camps in Germany (Agamben 1998) or the British colonial detention camps in the 1950s Kenya (Wanjaũ 1988; Elkins 2006). Yet camps often work towards both ends, simultaneously caring for their subjects and brutally exposing them to death. We argue that in order to grasp the apparent contradiction between the camp as a place that appears at once to be a place of abandonment and a place of intense, biopolitical care, we may explore notions of death and of winning life at the Iwawa centre. The aim of this paper is to explore how the role of death in discipline shapes the space of confinement. Exposure to death works at once to transform young men who are believed to give in to their immediate bodily needs, into good citizens while also recreating hierarchies within the camp between winners and losers.

In order to understand Iwawa, we need first to contextualize the camp in the

[41] Although one might view the young men at Iwawa as convicts, prisoners, or internees, we choose to use the official terms, graduate and trainee.

Rwandan political landscape, where the regime is trying to create a new citizenry from scrap after the genocide and where camps of all sorts are often used as a means to achieve this. The first section of this article will be concerned with this, based on secondary literature and on our own fieldwork among government actors in 2009, 2011 (Turner), 2013-14 and 2015-16 (Løvgren). After contextualizing the use of encampment in Rwanda, we explore the disciplining techniques of Iwawa, showing how it intends to create ideal citizens who are able to put aside individual and immediate needs and desires. This means sacrificing the animal-like instincts of the trainees for the common whole and ultimately for the nation. After analyzing the camp as a device (Agier 2014, 21–23) for disciplining animal-like youth and creating ideal citizens, we explore the other side of the camp: what happens when the camp does not produce ideal citizens? Here, we explore the fact that trainees always live with the possibility of death and we show that this creates 'winners' and 'losers' and how this (re-)produces hierarchies within the camp. Finally, we explore the role that the wilderness plays in the camp – in the shape of the lake, the forest and the wild animals – seeping into the disciplinary space of the camp. The wilderness creates the possibility of death but also, we argue, the possibility of escape. This article is based on interviews with Iwawa graduates and trainees, government officials, relatives to trainees and graduates, brief visits to the island itself – always accompanied by police and military personnel – as well as newspaper articles and information from ministry websites. Permission was never given to do long-term fieldwork on Iwawa. Løvgren interviewed 50 graduates from the center over the course of three months.

The role of camps in contemporary Rwanda

In the following, we outline the national context of the Iwawa rehabilitation centre, arguing that the post-genocide state is keen on creating a new nation with a new citizenry and that encampment has become a prominent tool for this project. In this context, Iwawa represents part of the Rwandan state's endeavor to create a new Rwanda with new kinds of citizens. Coming out of an exceptional situation of genocide in 1994, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), once a rebel army and now Rwanda's ruling party, has transformed its wartime tactics to government employed strategies of social engineering on a large scale (Beswick 2012; Jowell 2014). The Rwandan state follows a twofold policy of heavily centralised social engineering on the one hand and a strong emphasis on national security on the other (Waldorf 2011; Beswick 2010). For both purposes a strong, centralised state is needed. The creation of such a state has been made possible by several factors. First, one might argue that Rwanda has a long tradition of centralised statebuilding (Rusagara 2009; Des Forges 2011), and although the post-genocide regime does what it can to distance itself from the previous regimes, there are striking resemblances in the style of governance. Second, the RPF provided an experienced, disciplined and highly hierarchical organisation that was able to transfer its military

experience to state building (Dorsey 2000). Third, the previous state had produced the genocide and had therefore lost any claims to moral legitimacy, which meant that there was no internal opposition or competing narratives about the character of the conflict.

This allowed the RPF leadership to bring in members of especially the tutsi diaspora to be in charge of creating a new state from scratch. James Scott's concept of a state that almost religiously believes in the beauty of development (Scott 1998, 231) seems appropriate in Rwanda. In many cases, Scott argues, such 'schemes to improve the lives of citizens' fail due to bureaucratic incompetence, corruption and resistance from the 'beneficiaries' – the people exposed to improvement (Scott 1998, 253). In Rwanda, however, there is a high degree of implementation by a competent bureaucracy with what appears to be limited resistance from the beneficiaries. In other words, Rwanda is following a path to state building and economic development that is tightly controlled from above by a new elite that is not inhibited by compromise. However, the image of a controlling elite enforcing a top-down approach to development on a resisting population does not completely fit the Rwandan situation, as the people subjected to these policies in many situations actively support government programmes (own observations, Sundberg 2014; Purdeková 2012; Kagaba 2016). In the case of Iwawa, people from many different layers of society admit their sons, nephews or brothers for rehabilitation on their own initiative and not because they are forced to do so by the authorities.

The aim of this social engineering on a massive scale, is not simply to ensure economic growth but also at a general level to rebuild the moral tissue of a population, believed to be devastated by genocide. RPF has, in the words of Andrea Purdeková, an overarching focus on "order and visibility, containment and cleansing" (Purdeková 2013, 2). In this way, governance in Rwanda operates through caring for the security and health of the country's population, while simultaneously asserting sovereignty and control over even the most intimate aspects of life in Rwanda. Through the specter of the genocide, the Rwandan state performs its sovereignty through a mixture of intensive training and care of those to be included and brutal removal of those who stand in its way. Iwawa, we argue, constitutes both sides of this governance; it brutally removes those who are deemed dangerous to themselves and to the moral tissue of society – the delinquents – but it also offers them the possibility of becoming moral citizens through intensive care and discipline. If, indeed, they are able to win life.

Iwawa as a disciplinary space

The image of the camp on Iwawa Island – being a place where delinquents are abandoned and out of sight, not only in the bush, but also surrounded by a vast lake – lends itself to an Agambenian image of the camp as an exceptional space, outside the rule of law where the sovereign state may strip the detained of their political subjectivities and reduce them to bare life (Agamben 1998, 2000). However, those

who enter Iwawa are not merely expelled (Sassen 2014, 54–63) or contained; they are actively worked upon. The Rwandan state exposes them to extensive training programmes of bodily and mental improvement, as it does in its other citizen camps, the *ingando* camps for ex-combatants and sex workers (among others) and the *itorero* camps for secondary school graduates and public servants (Mgbako 2005; Sundberg 2014; Purdeková 2015) in order to transform their subject status and create new ideal citizens, ready to be re-inserted in the 'new Rwanda'.

Rwanda's education camps follow to a large degree the formula of the political education camps run in exile by the Rwanda Patriotic Front in the 1980s and 90s, where trainees where educated about the political aims of the RPF and trained in bodily discipline through various military performances (Reed 1995; Purdeková 2011b; Jowell 2014). While *Itorero* is for citizens with special responsibility as beacons in the new Rwanda – such as diaspora youth, students and civil servants – Iwawa rehabilitation camp is more in line with the rehabilitation camps for ex-convicts and ex-rebel soldiers; they all aim at turning 'bad life into good life' (S. Turner 2014). The government authorities and the interviewed graduates alike give similar explanations as to why some young men are in need of rehabilitation on Iwawa. They do drugs, they drink, they get into fights with each other and their neighbors, they steal, they have unprotected sex and they solicit sex workers. The short description is often "bad behaviors", "lack of discipline", or the Swahili military jargon *zagara* – disorganization or disorder – given that members of the Rwandan Defence Forces often use Swahili as the language of instruction or command. In interviews, government officials and graduates alike often stated that the authorities at Iwawa were "like parents to the boys there". This rests on the assumption that 'delinquent' (MYICT 2012) youth come from broken families and often are orphans. Orphans loom large in Rwanda's official imaginary – either as innocent victims of the genocide or as potential threats to moral order – and Iwawa is perceived to be part of the solution to the latter. In this way, the centre is inscribed in a national and global context where the unregulated energies of young men have long been associated with destabilizing violence and where the RPF led government would often cite "lack of discipline" (Purdeková 2011b, 36) as an explanation for the genocide. In other words, Iwawa should be seen in the light of a general context of fighting what is perceived to be fertile breeding grounds for genocide. [42]

The efforts to install moral stamina in Rwanda's young men consist of intense physical military discipline. In the phrasing of Daniel, who attended Iwawa, "The first three months are all about parade". 'Parade' denotes synchronized military marching performances. In the narratives of Iwawa graduates, they would start every morning at 4 am by going for *chaka-mchaka*, which is Swahili military jargon

[42] Systematic research about perpetrators, however, has described them as "in every way ordinary members of their community. They were all married with children. Their average age was thirty-two […]. Most stated their occupation as cultivator or farmer" (Fujii 2009, 130; see also Verwimp 2005; Straus 2008).

for stretch marching – "an onomatopoeic expression mimicking the sound made by military boots during marches" (HRW 2000; see also Purdeková 2015; Verma 2013). Having finished *chaka-mchaka* at 7 am, they would have porridge for breakfast and then move on to performing parade until 11 am. Via these tightly scheduled military performances "time penetrates the body" (Foucault 1995, 138) and, we may add, inscribes the bodies of trainees in a larger order; that of the immortal Rwandan nation state. In her study of *Itorero* training camps, Sundberg observed:

> Trainees were instructed in things as simple as the right way to say yes (yego! Or 'Yes Sir') to orders or rhetorical questions, when and how to leave lecture halls, how to move their arms and hands in different claps, and the appropriate way to walk, sit, stand and dress. […] The repetition of slogans, claps, and songs was considered key transformative instruments through which the Itorero trainee converted from a normal person to a model citizen.' (Sundberg 2014; 154).

A model citizen in this framework is a person whose body is disciplined in every detail and in unity with the rest of the citizenry. Frank Rusagara, former Rwandan general and *ingando* instructor, illustrates this rationale, when he argues that in Rwandan education camps, "individuals are reminded to subject their interests to the national ideal and give Rwanda their all" (cf. PRI 2004, 111). As opposed to how 'street boys' and 'delinquents' are perceived to threaten societal security through their search for quick thrills, Rwanda's education camps inscribe their bodies and their interests in a larger order – socially, spatially and temporally.

Umoja, meaning unity in Swahili, was brought up in almost all interviews with both graduates and government officials. In line with the practices of *itorero* and *ingando* (Sundberg 2014; Purdekova 2011), the military instructors at Iwawa would shout *abajene* (youth), and the Iwawa trainees would reply in unison *umoja*. A graduate of *ingando* explained to Løvgren that although Rwandan education camps had their flaws, Løvgren could not really have any idea about how it felt to be part of these military exercises. "You can't begin to imagine […]. I understood why soldiers are the way they are […] You feel a kind of focus you can't find anywhere else […] When I came out of there, I was like this…" he explained and used his hand to map out a straight line in front of him, which he then followed in a quick march. These embodied practices that are common in many contexts of military training, produce a concrete and tangible sense of being part of whole; the Rwandan development state.

Sacrificing immediate needs for the common good

According to Iwawa graduates, the military instructors at Iwawa would often refer to their own experiences with living in the bush when they were part of what they call Rwanda's liberation struggle in the 1990s, in order to explain the rationale of the rehabilitation program. Being exposed to the hardships of military life is

intended to eradicate their focus on their individual needs and focus instead on the larger goals of the nation-state (Rusagara 2009). Escaping the center's compound in search for food, defecating outside the designated spaces, and sexual intimacy between the trainees are perceived to demonstrate a mindset focused on the subject's immediate needs. Homosexual relationships between trainees were severely punished, not because they were seen as against God's will or unnatural, but because such relations allow for the satisfaction of immediate desires rather than taking responsibility for a collective future.

Rose:	*Do you know why they punish homosexuality?*
Faustin:	They say when you engage in those activities you are not likely to be able to find a wife.
Rose:	*Do they explain why it's important to find a wife?*
Faustin:	They say when you have a wife you cannot waste your money the way you do as a single man.

Along the same lines, most graduates mentioned developing a savings culture as an important lesson in Iwawa's civic education. Instructors had told them that saving their money, rather than spending them on their immediate needs or desires such as alcohol, drugs or sex workers, would allow them to develop themselves and develop the country. How men live out their sexuality inside and outside of the centre is thus explicitly linked to the larger development goals of the nation. Military instructors at Iwawa frame the hardships they have personally experienced, as sacrifices for the nation, strengthening their patriotism, and explicitly expose the trainees to similar hardships in order to create a similar transformation in them. Through its disciplining practices, we argue, the Rwandan state treats Iwawa trainees like men who are in the grips of their instincts and hence unable to control their immediate needs such as violence, drugs and sex. The disciplining violence that permeates Iwawa can be seen in this light; on the one hand disciplining the bodies of those who will 'win life', while on the other hand, it weeds out those who do not succeed by killing them off.

Death in abandonment and discipline

Though many of the young men interviewed described a change from bad behaviors to being a good citizen, they also described the process as highly precarious and saw the camp as life threatening. In the words of Samuel, before you are able to "win the course", you first have to go through the initial phases of rehabilitation, where you may easily "lose your life". "You struggle and try to improve yourself so that you may win life". Fidel, who had been sent to Iwawa by his father, explains why he feared that he could die at Iwawa.

Rose:	*You thought you could die at Iwawa?*
Fidel:	Yes. They [the instructors on Iwawa] give very harsh punishments to

> put the fear in you such that you won't return to your former misbehavior.

In Fidel's experience, the fear of death was due to the harsh punishments, which were intended, he argues, to 'put the fear in you' in order to improve your future life, preventing the trainees from 'returning' to their 'former behaviour' and pushing them forward to a life as good citizens. However, while promising a better future, the punishments also gave him a feeling of being constantly on the verge of death. According to another graduate, beatings on Iwawa are more intense than for example beatings from schoolteachers. Describing a scenario where he saw another trainee beaten to death for disobedience, he explained: "They beat us, the way you would beat a snake". While schoolchildren are beaten so as to improve their behavior, snakes are beaten in order to kill them off.

In an interview, Pascal was recounting how trainees were beaten to death by the military instructors, but then seemed to regret the statement and retracted it.

> Rose: *How many were those who died after being beaten?*
> Pascal: Actually, I cannot ensure you that they died because they were beaten.
> Rose: *What other things could they have died of?*
> Pascal: The center was still new. Because of the climate and the situation of life, some of us, as men, became like children. They [the other trainees] felt that the climate gave them a bad situation of life.

Death, in other words, is not just the result of violence by the instructors; it may also be the result of the space itself. This space reminds us of ritual liminality where 'men became like children'. Children, in his view, are lesser humans whom one can command and control. He also shows, however, how closely linked this liminal space is to the possibility of death. So whereas 'men becoming like children' refers to a controlled space of ritual transformation, the 'climate' and the 'bad situation' create an unsafe space; a space where you may perish. Iwawa may, in other words, be understood both as ritual liminality and as a liminal space between life and death, and there is a conceptual link between these two senses of liminality.

During the first phase of rehabilitation, Iwawa trainees are responsible for the cooking and cleanliness in the center. This part of rehabilitation was in interviews often referred to as "the complicated one". Cooking entails that the trainees are sent into the woods of the island to collect firewood. As medical assistance is limited, the cuts and scrapes acquired within the forest can pose serious health problems, as can the snakes and other animals living in the forest. Being located on an Island, far from medical help and normal life, contributes to their sense of abandonment; a kind of abandonment that leads very concretely to the risk of disease and death. Our reason for framing these activities as a form of abandonment relates to graduate narratives emphasizing their lived experiences of the isolation

on the island, the danger of the forest, the lake and the general conditions.[43]

Explaining why people died on Iwawa, D'amour said that he was in the first group to undergo rehabilitation and that at the time "that place was pure forest". Christopher Taylor argues that

> Rwandan cultivators do not think highly of the forest. At best, it is a place to obtain wood. At worst, it is an impediment to cultivation, requiring hard labor to clear. It is also a fearful place of snakes, wild animals, and malevolent spirits. People connected to the forest, like 'Batwa mpunyu', bear its negative associations of wildness and savagery (C. C. Taylor 2011, 184).

According to a high-ranking employee in the Ministry of Youth, in early 2014, 95% of Iwawa's area was covered by forest and 5% was occupied by the center. Apart from being surrounded by forest and all the dangers that this entailed, a big lake also surrounded the island. A common answer to questions about what they saw as the threat to their lives on Iwawa was that the place was "surrounded by water". Especially the graduates, who had grown up far from the lake, feared the water. Fils, who spoke very positively about the Iwawa rehabilitation programme and kept coming back to how he now had a much better life due to it, claimed that the lake had contributed to the efficiency of the camp and to his own transformation into a better person. When asked about his relations with other young men at the center, he explained that they had been living well together because the center had improved their discipline as a unit. "There are many things that facilitate unity, changing behaviors and a better discipline on Iwawa, especially that it is enclosed by water and there is no way to escape." Some people had tried to escape, Fils explained, but had drowned in the lake, and so he had known throughout his rehabilitation that escape was not an option. Fils experienced that the isolation of the centre gave him a choice between transforming according to the requirements of rehabilitation or dying in the attempt to escape them. The forest represented a threat, but was also a space of opportunity where trainees could temporarily seek to escape the discipline of the center as well as the abandonment they experienced in the form of starvation.

Jean Paul, who described himself as having been "a criminal" while on Iwawa, said that he and his friends would disobey the orders of the military instructors and often venture into the forest to search for food. Earlier in the interview, he had described very severe punishments, and had said that he saw other men beaten to death for disobedience. When asked how he dared escape the center in light of these experiences, he said that he did not feel he had a choice. "You go crazy with hunger,

[43] While we cannot speculate about whether letting 'delinquents', 'street boys' and 'undisciplined boys' die off on Iwawa Island is the intention of the involved government authorities, we do interpret the narratives we have engaged in this article as though their deaths in practice is a cost that the authorities are willing to incur. It is from a Foucauldian approach to interpreting power that we look at the work of the camp in order to characterize its intention (Foucault 1991).

and you become like a wild animal [...] We, as criminals, don't mean to do bad things, but when the hunger is too strong you can't control yourself". While tough discipline and regular beatings were meant to toughen the spirit and lead to new, better citizens who could sacrifice their needs for the common good, it had the opposite effect in Jean Paul's case. He describes feeling pushed to the point where he could think of nothing but his own immediate need for food although he also clearly understands that looking for food would threaten his life because of the punishment he would face. We may say that in contrast to the intended effects of the program, he lost his 'moral stamina' because of the hardships of military life and became in his words 'like a wild animal'.

The different reactions of Fils and Jean Paul may be related to the hierarchies within and outside of Iwawa Island. Fils has a family and never lived on the streets, but was sent to rehabilitation by his mother with his own consent, he said, because he was "exhausted by drugs". Jean Paul had been a "street child" as long as he could remember, and had been arrested in a general operation because he had no identity card. Social hierarchies from the mainland function in a concentrated way on Iwawa Island, and structure how some trainees manage to win life while others are more exposed to losing it.

Winners and losers at Iwawa

"Some lose their lives because they are civilian. Those who do not have the habits of military, they lose their life". This was how Daniel, a graduate who said he had done very well on Iwawa, explained why he thought there were so many deaths on the island. He had no previous military training, he said, but he had a disciplined mindset. He explains that a military instructor had seen from his manner and way of carrying himself that he was "a home boy", meaning a boy who grew up in a home as opposed to a "street boy". Daniel comes from a much better socio-economic background than the majority of the trainees on the island, and the instructor had taken special care of him during rehabilitation and helped him get promoted quickly in the hierarchical military organization of the center.

Victor Turner has argued that liminality brings about a state of 'communitas' or equality of condition: a space in which people are stripped of all social markers, resulting in a cessation of "society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of 'more' or 'less'" (V. W. Turner 1969, 96; Purdeková 2011b, 44). This is similar to Rusagara's vision of unity, where individuals subject their interests to the national ideal in order to give Rwanda their all. However, liminality on Iwawa (as in other liminal spaces) also produces and reproduces hierarchy. First, the official setup of the camp is hierarchically organized, as the trainees are organized in regiments, companies and platoons, all of which have a trainee as commander. Furthermore, hierarchies from the rest of Rwandan society are hardly left behind at Iwawa. There is a high degree of faith in

the long-term objectives of Iwawa among the ruling elite, and consequently, it is not uncommon for them to send their sons, nephews or brothers to the island for rehabilitation, when they consider them to have lost their way. Young men from privileged backgrounds, like Daniel, often mentioned that one or more of the military instructors had taken special care of them. Forming such friendships with the military instructors entailed a number of benefits for some of them, among them quick promotions within the Iwawa hierarchy, and ultimately assisting them in 'winning life'. Theodore, who was also educated and had held a high-level position among the trainees at Iwawa, argued that he had undergone a change at Iwawa. When he used to do drugs, he said, he believed that all human beings were equal.

Rose: *After going to Iwawa, you no longer believe that human beings are all equal?*
Theodore: No, not everyone is equal. I have found that there are some people who need to be more respected than others. They are the ones who are in charge, who take care of the life of others.

Being 'civilian', according to Daniel, meant failing to interpret the codes of military conduct. He gave defecating outside of the center's latrine as an example of how some young men failed to understand the lessons taught by the military:

> They teach us like a lesson: "you are one". […] When they say "Students!, you say "One!". That means you are one […]. You see, there are some things.. they are undisciplined boys, the ones who was living on the streets. You see how someone can go and make a shit there? You see how you can go and make a crap in the forest like that. To show you, if you are one, they tell you to go and touch the crap of someone you don't know, and then to put it on your eyes and then you say: "It's me who has done that."

Daniel here describes, how he was more disciplined than many of the other trainees in that he knew not to defecate in the forest like the 'undisciplined boys'. Furthermore, he knew that although he considered himself superior, he had to participate in the military production of unity through the humiliating procedure of putting another man's shit on his eyelids. The trainees who did not manage to comply with the many requirements posed by military training, Daniel explained, were heavily punished. Added to the physical hardships of carrying heavy sandbags, marching for many hours a day and getting very little nutrition, they would lose their lives from not undergoing the subject transformation towards discipline that was necessary for survival on the island. The men who repeatedly disobeyed orders, stole food from the soldiers' gardens, engaged in sexual intimacy with each other, and defecated outside of the latrines were more exposed to punishments than those who demonstrated discipline by abstaining from these activities and following the rules of the center. According to their narratives, they moreover spend up to two years longer on the island than others, since it is up to the instructors to decide when a particular trainee is ready to graduate. Daniel went on to argue that while

there were many benefits related to having a leader position at Iwawa, there were also high demands. When asked whether he himself avoided beatings through his special relationship with the military instructor, he answered:

> I was beaten much! […] You can't train, you can't train others without to train yourself. […] It means you, first of all you're supposed to be trained. It means they beat me too [very] much for to show me how I can beat those… my friends, eh?

Being beaten is here described as training. He was beaten severely, not to kill him off, but rather to transform him and his body into a disciplined citizen who is able to suffer for the common good. Furthermore, he was beaten more than others because he was expected to act as a beacon and a role model for others, due to his position in the camp. Only through this sacrifice and unquestioning subjugation could he become worthy of beating others. The beating that he refers to differs from the stories of being 'beaten like a snake'. Hence, beating has the dual function of improving those who are worthy while killing off those who fail. The 'home boys' or those with 'military mindsets' manage to perform the discipline expected of them and manage to 'win life'. Those who do not win life, risk perishing – due to exposure to the forest or the lake or to being beaten like a snake. The lake and the forest work as deterrents that keep them inside the centre. However, they are not fully protected from the dangers of the forest, as they have to collect firewood. In this sense the wilderness enters the orderliness of the Iwawa camp and creates a slippage from pure discipline to the risk of death. Finally, trainees may choose to leave the disciplinary space of the rehabilitation centre and try their luck in the forest. By doing so, they are not 'winning life' in the sense of succeeding to become the kind of subject that Iwawa is meant to create out of delinquents. But they are perhaps winning life in other senses. In a sense, these trips to the forests are a means of escaping the disciplining machinery of the camps. They embrace the wilderness, running the risk of death that the forest imposes, but also seeking the vitality that the forest offers in terms of the fruit and wild animals that may be eaten. In this sense they follow their bodily needs and desires, ignoring the disciplinary state's call for sacrifice.

Conclusion

This article argues that there is a conceptual link between liminality and death. The strict disciplining practices at Iwawa are a kind of ritual liminality, creating new citizens out of the delinquents that enter the liminal space of the centre. Simultaneously, the trainees are exposed to death, which can lead to killing the animal in them, giving room for the birth of the disciplined man. It may also, however, lead to the death of trainees, perishing in the wilderness or becoming/remaining 'wild'. In this sense, Iwawa creates winners and losers, and it is this risk of losing – of becoming perishable life – that drives the trainees to

improve and 'win', thus linking the camp as abandonment and improvement. Through tough discipline and order the camp instructors try to remove the disorderly behaviours, 'bad life' (S. Turner 2014), that are linked to immediate needs and desires – what we have called the animal within them – and replace them with civilized behaviour that is directed towards the future and towards the common good. Orderly behaviour may be marching and chanting in unison, choreographic belonging to a larger whole. It may also be sacrificing immediate needs such as food or sex in order to strengthen a future as part of a larger whole; the family and the nation. This reading of the camp as a place to create new subjectivities through discipline does not, however, account for the role that the threat of death plays in the rehabilitation centre. The severe discipline at the camp may beat out the animal within a trainee, transforming him into a good citizen, but it may equally kill him in the process. According to the young men who have been to Iwawa, not everyone is able to 'win life'; the camp is a course where some win and some loose. We have argued that the possibility of losing – the specter of death – is an essential aspect of the camp and accounts for its double function of simultaneously improving and abandoning life. We may also understand Iwawa as a liminal site in ritual practice, stripping the *initiands* of their previous identities and transforming them to new personae, ready to be sent back out into society. While this goes some way to explain Iwawa, it assumes a *communitas* where all are equal – just as it assumes that all survive the transformation. We observed, however, that the threat of death introduced winners and losers and did not guarantee this ritual transformation. The fight to 'win life' meant that some trainees did better than others, and often this depended on their social backgrounds before arriving at the camp. The 'home boys' who in their own words knew how to be 'disciplined' had often been sent to the centre by their family while the 'street boys' who were undisciplined had come off the streets. Social position thus was reproduced in the camp not only in the privileges that certain trainees were given by the staff but also through their ability to 'win life'. Exposure to death moreover relates to the threat from the wilderness, surrounding the camp: the lake, the forest, the 'climate', wild animals and infections. So, while the camp was constructed to remove the animal side of the young men and create disciplined citizens, closer to civilization, it also was saturated with the opposite of civilization; namely wilderness. Where wilderness on the one hand represented a threat to the lives of trainees, it also represented an opportunity for some. For Jean Paul the wilderness was his only way to survive. The hunger and discipline of the camp had not transformed him into a good citizen beyond his immediate needs. On the contrary, it had made him 'go wild' with hunger, forcing him to flee to the forest, hunting and gathering to fill his belly and survive. While he did not manage to 'win life', he managed to survive, and – we might add – he avoided being transformed into the ideal citizen.

5. Conducting unleashing interviews where control means life or death (article 2)

Chapter abstract

This chapter discusses ethical concerns about empathetic engagement in interviews about violence. It discusses cases from fieldwork in Rwanda where emotional investment in the field can be experienced as deeply intrusive and explores the ethical and political meaning of the author's own doubts and insecurities with regards to these encounters. The chapter argues that interviewees living in violent settings may at times subdue their sense of self as a survival tactic. When the research interview works to affirm the interviewee's sense of self, it is often experienced as a threat. The chapter discusses a case where insecurity in the aftermath of a research encounter took part in structuring the author's gendered and sexed positionality in the field. The cases discussed are used to illustrate that empathetic engagement in violent research settings can cause interviewees experience of harm through loss of control in a setting where control means life or death.

Chapter Keywords: researching violence, research ethics, interview methodology, the emotional in fieldwork, gendered and sexed positionality, political subjectivity, Rwanda

Introduction

On using interviews to research violence, Cynthia Enloe has argued that '[i]t takes feminist listening [...] to *take on board* interviewees' contradictions, confusions and anxieties' (Enloe 2011, 142). This chapter sets out to explore the dynamics of 'taking on board' the emotions of interviewees in settings marked by violence. Within feminist international relations, ethnography and similar approaches to studying violence, it is often argued that engagement with the field should first and foremost be empathetic (Dominguez 2000; Fontana and Frey 2005; Cowburn 2013; Johnston 2015). However, we spend less effort considering what processes empathetic engagement may open up within the field or what aftermath follows from it.

The interviews I have carried out as part of my research about violence in Rwanda has often engaged intimate and traumatic aspects of my respondents' lives, which, due to their political and social sensitivity, they had rarely delved into in

conversations with others. When research interviews engage such issues, interviewees may come to experience the disclosure as prompting new understandings of past events (Birch and Miller 2000; Hollway and Jefferson 2000; Rubow 2003; Holmes 2013). Thus, 'this sort of qualitative interview setting can be seen to parallel the therapeutic encounter' (Birch and Miller 2000, 190). While there are differences in the aims and structure of research interviews and therapeutic encounters (Kvale 1996; Laine 2000; Seidman 2013), my interviewees often told me that the interview felt therapeutic simply because telling their story, even without therapeutic feedback from my side, gave them an outlet in a situation where such outlets are few. Relief, however, was often followed by anxiety about the consequences of having shared too much information. Feeling that he had exposed himself, an interviewee subsequently called my assistant and asked accusingly: "What kind of girl did you bring into my office?"

In discussing such mixed reactions to the research interview, I present two arguments, one concerning the ethical aspects of researching violence, and another wherein I argue that the emotional ambivalence my research encountered speaks to an analytical point about political subjectivity and violence. That is, the violence my research engages worked to make a number of my respondents choose a strategy I here term 'subduing their sense of self' in order to survive it. By subduing their sense of self, I refer to what my respondents described as a choice of obeying the orders they were given, as well as "accepting" their violent conditions by controlling their emotional responses of, for example, humiliation, sorrow or anger. The research interview gave them an opportunity to use me as an audience to re-affirm their sense of self, but not without again causing anxiety about how this self-affirmation could threaten their survival. Self-affirmation, moreover, was often accompanied by an expressed desire for my response to the narrative presented. With a focus on the unleashing aspects of interviews about violence, I argue that my gendered and sexed positionality among my respondents was structured, not only by my embodied presence, but also by the emotional connection experienced by some of my interviewees in our interviews.

Background

My original research focus in Rwanda was the rehabilitation centre for 'delinquent' (MYICT 2012) young men placed on Iwawa Island in Lake Kivu, where around 2,000 men at a time have been regularly detained for periods of one to three years since early 2010. Delinquency refers, for example, to drug and alcohol abuse, street vending and street loitering. Between 2013 and 2014 I did three months of research about the centre, which was mainly based on semi-structured interviews with men who had graduated from Iwawa. The centre is run by military authorities and access is limited due, in part, to their efforts to keep its activities minimally exposed. Since 2013, I have spent close to three years living and working in Rwanda, and from 2015–16, I attempted to follow up on my research concerning Iwawa. In April 2016, after having tried for 18 months to get a renewed research

permit, I was, instead, deported from Rwanda with reference to how my application was 'illegal'. Violence thus features in my research in a number of ways. Rehabilitation includes psychotherapy, civic education and vocational skills training, but was in my interviews also commonly portrayed as a violent process. Beatings, ceremonial humiliations and a demanding physical military regiment, on an island with limited nutrition and healthcare facilities, are among the factors that threaten and cost the lives of many young men on Iwawa. In its military hierarchical organisation, trainees are, moreover, trained in inflicting violence on those below them in the chain of command.

More broadly, violence is heavily employed in the control of information in Rwanda. As a foreign national, I experienced this during my deportation, where the possibility of violence was repeatedly implied. Being deported, however, is a mild fate compared to the many Rwandan journalists, researchers, artists and other members of the public who have suffered long prison sentences, intimidation and even death by the hand of different representatives of the government for offences as small as encouraging a delay in the implementation of government policy (Purdeková 2011a; Straus and Waldorf 2011b; Chakravarty 2012; Sundaram 2015).

In this way, control of information in Rwanda is clearly linked to survival. Existing literature on the therapeutic dimensions to qualitative interviews has engaged the ethical concern that they may work to 'unleash' (Birch and Miller 2000, 195) and change the interviewees' emotional state and sense of self in a way that researchers do not necessarily have the resources to handle (Laine 2000; Connolly and Reilly 2007; Holmes 2013; Seidman 2013). Arguably, there is even more at stake when the research interview works to unleash information in a violent setting, where this may lead to very concrete and tangible consequences such as arrest, physical punishments and death. In this chapter, I discuss the additional ethical challenge this poses for researchers of violence, as well as my ethical concerns about interviews that unleash emotional reactions in a context where controlling one's emotions has often been explained to me as a question of life or death.

In 2013–14, I worked with a research assistant who acted as my interpreter during most of the interviews. At the time, I spoke little Kinyarwanda, which is the national language of Rwanda, and for around 90 per cent of the country's population the only language they speak (Tollefson 2013). In some places we used cooperatives for Iwawa graduates in order to get in touch with them, while in others we simply approached the groups of young men hanging out on the streets and asked them if they knew any Iwawa graduates who might be willing to talk to us. Using these tactics we found 50 graduates, and some of their relatives, living inside or in the areas near three of Rwanda's larger cities. Some interviews took place in people's homes, but often our respondents had no stable place to live, and we instead sat in bars or other places in the cities where we could have the best possible degree of seclusion. Rehabilitation is both politically, socially and

personally a sensitive subject, so whenever we were hanging out in public spaces, we never broached the subject. This framing of the interview situation, I believe, played a part in making the interviews work like small pockets where sensitive issues were shared with great intensity, because of their delimitation in time and space.

Ambivalence of relief and threat

A Rwandan friend of mine once told me that Rwandans keep their secrets locked up so tightly and for so long that when they do talk about them it is like they are vomiting. In 2013, I conducted an interview with a mother of one of the graduates from Iwawa, whom I here call Josephine,[44] in her house. My assistant explained to Josephine in Kinyarwanda what the interview was going to be about, its purpose, how long it would take, and assured her that she could stop the interview when she wanted to move on to other things. From her son's wife, we had previously been told that Josephine was responsible for sending her son to Iwawa, and she probably knew this since she had seen us meet and talk to her. Our presence in her compound and the topic of the interview seemed to constitute an accusation in itself for Josephine, and I perceived her as being very defensive from the outset of our meeting. In her narrative, she had been fighting with her son about a financial issue, and the fight had escalated to the point where she had him arrested by the local police force. It is not uncommon to involve the police in domestic disputes in Rwanda (Kagaba 2016), and Josephine is by no means the only parent among my respondents who caused her son to go to Iwawa.

Josephine had lost control of the process, however, when the police decided not to release her son again at her request, but to send him to Iwawa. She explained that she had felt an enormous amount of guilt and sorrow about her involvement. She had at first anguished about where her son was sent, as she had not been informed about it. When she learned that he was on Iwawa, she had spent many sleepless nights fearing for his life, she told us. She spoke quickly and urgently, giving me the impression that she was trying to relieve herself of the story as fast as possible. She sat with her side to me and was mostly explaining things to my assistant. When she turned and faced me for the first time since we sat down, it was to ask me, "Isn't it enough now?"

Before I could respond to the question she immediately continued talking, adding other perspectives to what she had just said. Feeling dumbfounded, curious and wanting to give her space to talk about the issues that were spilling out of her, I said nothing and waited for her to pause. I then asked what was thought to be an innocent question to understand the context of what she was talking about. She started talking again, including many details in her story, especially about her

[44] I have changed the names of all my respondents, and in what follows I will refer to them by their pseudonyms.

emotional state. Then she turned to me again in the same way, asking me exhaustedly if it was not enough now, and again she continued straight into more aspects of the story without waiting for me to answer.

A few months after, I was discussing the interview with a colleague who, in response to Josephine's plea, jokingly accused me of being too ruthless to release her. At the time, I had felt very passive and receptive, yet also aware that she was obviously communicating to me that I was hurting her in some way, and unsure of what my role was in producing the ambivalent emotions that arose as we talked. At the beginning of the interview, I felt angry with her, having heard only her son's wife's version of how he had ended up at Iwawa. Not a hot fiery anger, but a general sense of frustration over the many cases of parental involvement in a process that costs young men their lives. This anger dispersed, however, almost immediately after Josephine began to talk. She had such an unmediated expression of regret, shame and pain, and I felt intense sympathy for her. When I did not stand up to end the interview, although she almost begged me to stop, it was because I had the impression that she also wanted space and time to finish her story.

Undoubtedly, part of what produced the ambivalent emotions in our interview was the unequal power dynamic between us. As discussed elsewhere, interviews about an interviewee's wrongdoing may easily come to resemble religious or criminal confessions (Kvale 2006; Tanggaard 2008; MacLean 2013). Foucault (Foucault 1990) has argued against what he terms a modern tendency to view confessional tales as liberating conveyors of truth. He explains that the inequality of the confessional relation itself produces, rather than simply communicates, the content of the narrative. The context of power inequality matters, and while objections during interviews can be interpreted as a way for the interviewee to challenge or draw attention to the authority of the researcher (Tanggaard 2008; Watson 2009), I here want to explore another aspect of how power inequality has played out in my interviews.

Unleashing interviews can be experienced as strongly relieving when the topic is violence and one's own role in producing it. For those who live in a setting marked by violence, however, there is something scary about the loss of control this process entails. Rwandans have often been described as a people who value composure and control of emotional expressions – as 'stoical citizens' (Gakuba 2016; see also Rusagara 2009; Uwanziga 2015). More generally, valuing composure relates to the form of violence surrounded by and productive of secrecy. Knowledge and communication about the violence in Iwawa rehabilitation, I argue, function as 'public secrets' (Bellman 1984, 3) – the content is widely known, but still treated as explosive if revealed. Such secrets function not solely by being kept, but by being open to exposure (Bellman 1984; Taussig 1999; Højbjerg 2003). It is the lingering possibility of sharing sensitive information that takes part in making it sensitive. As I experienced my interview with Josephine, she felt a sense of relief in, on the one hand, having a stranger listen to a story that she could not easily share with those around her (Gammeltoft 2003; Simmel 2010), while on the other, I believe she felt

exposed and that she was not comfortable being that exposed with me.

On the ethics of handling sensitive information produced by research interviews that resemble therapeutic conversations, Marlene de Laine writes: 'The problem could then become "is one to use the information or forget it altogether?"' (Laine 2000, 118). There is, however, an additional ethical aspect to this kind of research interview, namely, whether the information is used or not, it may be experienced as threatening for interviewees to have shared it. In interviews with Iwawa graduates, they have at times changed their mind after sharing sensitive information with me:

> Rose: *You told me you experienced some of the other trainees commit suicide?*
> Rafiki: Actually no.... I did not.... Some swam out in the lake in order to commit suicide, but they changed their minds and came back.

Rafiki's retraction does not create the dilemma described by de Laine as I do not need to quote him for something he did not mean to say, or that I simply misunderstood. My claim that suicides happen on Iwawa is based on stories from many other Iwawa graduates, who did not express regret or retract their statements, but on the contrary, emphasised that they wanted me to do something with the information by bringing it before a relevant audience.

What concerns me more is the unsettled emotional situation in which I left Josephine, Rafiki and the other interviewees who changed their minds. As soon as I experienced interviewees regretting what they just told me, I would change the subject and go into less controversial themes. My assistant, too, was very sensitive to changes in the interview atmosphere, and eager to partake in steering the conversation to where he felt that our interviewee was more at ease. We would end interviews by giving interviewees time to ask me questions, correcting something they said, and expanding on or emphasizing something they told us. These practical measures, however, do not solve the problem of mistrust and anxiety about my respondents' loss of control over information. In this way, my function of sometimes being considered a stranger to whom much may be divulged also made me an object of suspicion in the aftermath of an interview that unleashed more than my interviewee might have planned. Moreover, changes of mind, during or in the aftermath of interviews, also relate to the violence of the research act. As violence is reflected in my participant observations and interviews, it works to make my respondents subdue their sense of self as a strategy for surviving it. The research encounter disturbs this tactic for survival, and the emotional ambivalence of relief and threat occurring in my interviews may be interpreted as a reaction to this disturbance.

Using the research interview to regain a sense of self

In Homer's *Odyssey*, the main character Odysseus passes by the island of

Polymorphous, the Cyclops. Knowing that he will only survive his stay on the island by denying his own name, Odysseus introduces himself to Polymorphous as Udeis, meaning 'no one' in Ancient Greek (Homer 2005). Using this tactic, he paradoxically saves his life by negating himself. In Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's interpretation: 'the subject Odysseus denies his own identity, which makes him a subject, and keeps himself alive by imitating the amorphous. [...] But his self-assertion – as in all epics, as in civilization in general – is self-denial' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2001, 67–68).

On Iwawa, my respondents have often described using a strategy for survival that shares this aspect of hiding away their sense of self. That is, they chose to accept to carry out all orders, to accept all kinds of humiliating ceremonial punishments, and especially to control their emotional response to these situations in what they describe as deliberate manoeuvres to survive. In an interview with Musa, he first told me that he had tried hard to be allowed a trial to defend himself against the accusations that sent him to Iwawa. Since Iwawa is a place for rehabilitation and not a prison, however, it was not possible. Musa went to Iwawa convinced of his own innocence and with a strong feeling of being wronged. While on Iwawa, however, he told me that he could not allow himself to indulge in such considerations.

The topic came up as we were discussing nutrition at Iwawa. Hearing countless stories of starvation on the island, I had been surprised when I attended a graduation ceremony on the island and saw a number of obviously well-fed men weight lifting to entertain us guests. Musa argued that the difference between starving and being able to grow muscles related to controlling one's mindset. The trainees who starved on Iwawa, he said, "don't accept, and when you don't accept the life you are living, you grow thin. If you are there [on Iwawa] and when you accept the life you are living, you live in peace." In this way, acceptance as a strategy for survival is explained both as willingness to comply with orders and as placing yourself in a state of mind where you do not allow yourself to fully feel your emotional response to a given situation.

Having used a strategy of self-denial to survive on the Cyclops's island, Odysseus nevertheless brings himself and his crew into a lot of danger by calling out his real name to Polymorphous as they are leaving the island. This act of self-affirmation brings on him the curse that causes his journey home to last more than 10 years. Here again, a parallel may be drawn between Odysseus's self-affirmation and the self-affirmation undertaken by some of my interviewees. Violence on Iwawa causes many men to subdue their sense of self, and the interview situation is an opportunity to reaffirm it. In itself, retelling the course of events means reclaiming a story as one's own. In the retelling, an interviewee is no longer passive, no longer the receiver of orders, but someone who produces order through the narrative. As argued by Jackson:

> storytelling reworks and remodels subject-object relations in ways that subtly alter the balance between actor and acted upon, thus allowing us to feel that we actively

> participate in a world that for a moment seemed to discount, demean and disempower us (Jackson 2002, 16).

When my respondents, through our interviews, unleash their sense of self by producing a narrative that frames them as active rather than passive, they are nonetheless often still in a dangerous situation. In a manner similar to Odysseus, they may then be understood to affirm their sense of self before having left the liminal and life-threatening zone. Some of my respondents had moved on after graduation to better situations, but the majority of them were back on the streets, in situations similar to what had got them arrested in the first place.

Researching violence, we are often engaging people who are continuously in very insecure situations. When people use some degree of self-denial to survive, the research interview may be experienced both as relieving and threatening. In both cases, it may create intense desires for those in power positions during the process, such as the researcher, to react and take an active part in forming the interviewee's self-affirmation. That is, while I get the impression that my interviewees at times share with me so intensely because of my status as a stranger or 'non-person' (Gammeltoft 2003, 277, *author's translation*) in their daily lives, it is, in the interview situation, highly significant that I *am* a person with personal reactions to their narratives. Especially in a context marked by secrecy where my assistant and/or I may be the only audience to the story, I felt a claim on my reaction and judgement from my interviewee.

In an interview with Daniel, he told me that he had accepted all orders and that he had often been responsible for beating up the trainees below him in the Iwawa hierarchy. At the same time, he also kept coming back to the ways he had influenced these practices. Following up on his characterisation of violence in the Iwawa hierarchy, he added:

> But you see, I am some sort of a humanitarian, eh? I have some love for humanity, and I did many things to, to, to change the procedures there.

The desire to be understood and the desire for me to take an active part in affirming my respondents' sense of self, I argue, animated much of how my gendered and sexed positionality was established in the field.

Desire and love in the unleashing interview

Discussions of gendered and sexed positionality in research often centre on the threat posed to female researchers by expressions of desire in the field (Nordstrom and Robben 1995; Pollard 2009; Kloß 2016). While these discussions are highly important, there is often more being communicated in the expressions of desire that occur during research. My relation with one of my respondents illustrates how the emotional connection felt during an unleashing interview framed how he

responded to my gendered and sexed positionality.

Daniel, who was very eager to use our interviews to establish a narrative of his rehabilitation process that presented him as having actively changed how violence was performed on Iwawa, was also eager for me to understand him. He would at times get very frustrated and impatient with my clarifying questions:

> Rose: *Did they explain to you why you were being arrested?*
> Daniel: No! They do … haha…. I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, how can I explain it to you?

Daniel's 'no' came with such urgency I can hardly do justice to it on paper. Our transcribed interviews are full of pleas for me to understand him, to understand how he suffered, and to understand how he ended up committing the violence he committed; more than anything for me to understand what kind of person he is – that he is, at his core, a humanitarian. After we finished our second interview, he explained to me that we had to meet again. He had a lot more stories that I should hear in order for me to understand Rwandan politics. He also wanted to see me again, he told me, because he loved me and thought we should be together.

I was again surprised at his strong emotional reaction to the interviews, as I had been with Josephine's strong reaction. I had felt passive and receptive and thought that there was little basis for Daniel to declare that he understood what kind of person I was and that we would both be better off together. I told him that I was in a relationship and that I did not want us to be together. When we later talked, and Daniel was giving me the impression that he was going to wait until I was single and we could be together, I continued to tell him that even if I should become single we would not be together, because I am not in love with him. At that time, I remember him telling me something like: "You have just decided that you hate me, and I don't stand a chance."

Daniel and I speak with each other in English, and many Rwandans translate the Kinyarwanda word *kwanga* with both 'to refuse' and 'to hate'. I specified to Daniel that I do refuse being his girlfriend, but that when he used the English word 'hate', it carried more of the connotation of *kuzira* – to loath, to hate, to consider abominable – which I do not at all. In the situation, it felt important to say, to take his fear that I might hate him seriously, in light of the many exposing stories he had shared about his own violent actions. Therefore, the relation between us has filled me with doubt and uncertainty about what my role was in it and how I should proceed. Our dynamic has never felt threatening to me and we have never been in a situation where I feared that he would not respect my personal boundaries. Daniel has commented once on the sexual aspect of his attraction (telling me that white and brown chocolate is a delicious combination), but his emphasis has mostly been on our emotional connection. Thus, what I have struggled with is how to react to his expressed need for emotional acknowledgement. Rethinking my confusion now, about a year after Daniel accused me of hating him, I think first, that Daniel's

declaration of love also had something to do with the unleashing aspects of our interviews. Second, I question whether I was really all that passive and recognise that my fascination with him as a storyteller must have come across as its own kind of desire.

Thinking about qualitative interviews as unleashing, I venture the interpretation that part of what happened in our research encounter was that it became an opportunity for Daniel to talk about violence that impacted him deeply, and to re-make and re-present his own role in this violence. Subduing his sense of self with regards to his actions on Iwawa for more than a year and then re-affirming it in front of me, I propose, made Daniel want me to affirm it too. Love can be seen as a clear way of saying yes to and affirming another person (Sternberg and Weis 2006). In this view, his declarations of love have something in common with the phone call asking, "What kind of girl did you bring into my office?" That is, in both of these situations, our research encounter left my respondents feeling vulnerable, and they both reached out to me to keep track of how I received their information and to ask what aftermath would follow from it. Framed in this way, desire may also be related to the power inequality of the interview situation. The confessional relation that easily arises in interviews about violence plays a part in producing a desire for being absolved and affirmed.

As for my role in our relationship, I have always been intensely interested in what Daniel had to say. He is a reflective person who is generous with words, analytically perceptive, and has a way of narrating that is often poetic and beautiful. As discussed elsewhere ethnographic field research involves making relations, which again produces emotional investment in the field (Dominguez 2000; Pina-Cabral 2013; Besteman 2015). Unleashing interviews work as an involvement both in very intimate aspects of the emotional lives of interviewees and in their making of order and self-affirmation (Birch and Miller 2000; Rubow 2003). I felt care and concern for Daniel while listening to his stories, and though I felt at the time that I did little to provoke what seemed like grand declarations of love, I have since then come to think about how intensely my attention was directed towards him.

In her discussion of emotional investment during field research, Catherine Besteman develops a concept she terms 'ethnographic love', comprising of 'an openness to self-transformation and to the changes in intersubjectivity that happen over time. It insists on moral reflexivity, a critical moral awareness that shapes and defines the ethnographic encounter' (Besteman 2015, 33). What does it mean to have a critical moral awareness in the unleashing interview? For one thing, it means considering how love and empathy may open up processes experienced as deeply intrusive and disturbing by interviewees. As I have sought to show in this chapter, the very relief experienced by my interviewees as a response to my attempts at showing them acknowledgement, and giving space for them to talk openly about traumatising experiences, carries a threat with it.

The intensity of Daniel's declaration of love, and his repeated emphasis on how important it was that I understood him correctly and loved his true character,

suggests to me that these emotions were also intertwined with strong feelings of anxiety about the aftermath of unleashing interviews that left him feeling exposed and vulnerable. This is not to say that Daniel's emotions can be reduced to an issue resembling what psychologists describe as 'erotic transference' (Chiesa 1999, 125) – when patients fall in love with their therapist. What I have described here is simply my interpretation of one part of the story. My reason for emphasising this part is that it speaks to a larger story; a story about how unleashing research encounters take part in producing desire in the field, and about how the intensity with which desire is expressed may be related to feelings of guilt, threat and uncertainty in the aftermath of research engagement.

Conclusion

More than providing answers about how to proceed in interviews about violence, I have in this chapter raised my doubts and uncertainties in conducting them. Such doubts and uncertainties in the field, I argue, are not only a result of my being a young researcher working outside of the context I was born in, but speak to an aspect of what violence does. Analysing interviews with a focus on their unleashing effects, I have made an argument in favour of additional ethical consideration and an argument concerning political subjectivity and violence. When I argue in favour of additional ethical consideration, I do not offer a list of dos and don'ts that will guide future researchers through interviews about violence without causing harm in the field. Instead, I offer the concerns I have raised here as inspiration for the continuous reflective process that is ethical navigation in the field (Fujii 2012).

The situations and experiences that caused my ethical concern moreover inform my argument about political subjectivity and violence. My respondents' ambivalent emotional expressions of relief and threat when talking openly about violence, I have argued, relates to how violence in many cases makes subjects subdue their sense of self as a survival strategy. In an interview that unleashes information, emotions and the interviewee's sense of self, relief may be understood as related to self-affirmation. But this very relief carries threat within it in contexts where self-preservation is linked with a form of self-denial.

Reversely, framing political subjectivity in this way informs my ethical concern about the aftermath of unleashing interviews and unleashing research encounters in general. In other words, I have learned more about what is at stake ethically in my research encounters in Rwanda by understanding more about political subjectivity in this setting so thoroughly permeated by violence. These ethical and analytical considerations motivated my argument about desire in the field. The desire directed at me as a woman in the field related not only to my embodied positionality, but also to the role I played as the interviewer in my interviewee's self-affirmation and to the power inequality of the research encounter.

These are examples of how our empathetic engagements with the field are not always harmless. Enloe's concept of 'taking on board' the emotions of

interviewees, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, may therefore be guided by the critical moral awareness championed by Besteman in her account of 'ethnographic love'. Specifically, conducting unleashing interviews requires moral awareness about the possible experience of harm and intrusion caused by empathetic engagement through loss of control in a violent setting where control means life or death.

6. Learning ethnographically from sexual harassment. Whose violence is it anyway? (article 3)

Abstract

The paper discusses the epistemology of learning ethnographically from failed and painful experiences during fieldwork. Illustrating this process, I use my own experiences of sexual harassment and deportation in Rwanda to discuss the blurry boundaries between state and interpersonal violence. Analyzing certain aspects of these experiences, I engage conceptually with questions about how the state works in a centralized and omnipresent state like the Rwandan. Thus, the objective of the paper is dual; to make a methodological argument, and to make a conceptual move towards paying more analytical attention to the unstable boundaries of the state. These two arguments are connected by my embodied experience of being unable to interpret which parts of my sexually harassing relationship with a central gatekeeper related to the state's agenda and which parts consisted of its spillover effects. Reading this situation together with other empirical material about state violence in Rwanda, I characterize an analytical redirection by force, arguing that we have reason to trouble our distinctions between what we categorize as official, and what we dismiss as aberrations which are not included in our characterizations of what the state is.

Key words: Sexual harassment, sexualized gatekeepting, failure, Rwanda, state violence, state surfaces.

Introduction

What does it mean to learn ethnographically from sexual harassment? I mean it as an input to discussions about how we draw out knowledge about our research context from what is often our personal experiences of failure. It may sound off to include sexual harassment in a special issue on failure, but within methodological discussions of sexual harassment in fieldwork it is common to experience it this way (Moreno 1995; Ashkenazi and Markowitz 1999; Pollard 2009; I. Clark and Grant 2015; Johansson 2015; Kloß 2016; Caretta and Jokinen 2017), and this is how I experienced it too. Moreover, many of these accounts seem to resemble my experience of continuing an uncomfortable field relationship with a gatekeeper who had significant influence over whether my research would be possible at all (see also Mügge 2013). In this way, many cases of sexual harassment in field research may be seen as related to our fears of professional failure. To a fear that if we do not stay close to the persons harassing us, we will be blocked from our research

context.

Illustrating how we can learn ethnographically from painful and failed experiences, I use my own experiences of sexual harassment and deportation to build to an argument about the instability of the state's surfaces. These experiences are taken from three months of fieldwork in Rwanda between 2013 and 2014 concerning the Iwawa Rehabilitation Centre (a center for 'delinquent' male youth placed in an island in Lake Kivu (MYICT 2012)) and from my failed attempt at continuing this research from 2015-2016. During this period, I spent a year and a half trying to obtain a research permit for my PhD research but ended up being deported in April 2016. By analyzing certain aspects of this process, I engage conceptually with questions about how the state works in a centralized and omnipresent state like the Rwandan. In this way, the objective of the paper is dual; to make a methodological argument about how to learn ethnographically from painful personal experiences and to make a conceptual move towards paying more analytical attention to the blurry boundaries of the Rwandan state. The link between these two endeavors is my embodied experience of uncertainty about what, in my experiences of failure, was the work of the state, and what was about the interpersonal relationship between me and 'Fred'[45], the man harassing me.

The state in Rwanda has often been analyzed in binary terms. Researchers working in Rwanda have used terms like "center and periphery" (Ingelaere 2010a, 41), "top-down" (Ansoms 2011, 244; Straus and Waldorf 2011a, 4), and the government's "public transcript" versus the population's "hidden transcripts" (T. P. Williams 2016, 339). With these terms scholars have sought to capture a clash between how the state presents itself versus how "ordinary folks" (Thomson 2011b, 449) experience its initiatives. These arguments often draw on James Scott's conceptualization of the workings of the state. Briefly put, Scott characterizes the image of the state produced by the dominant elites, "the public transcript" (Scott 2007, 200), and contrasts it with the reality behind the scenes, "the hidden transcript" (Scott 2007, 201).

By emphasizing uncertainty in my encounters with the state, this paper argues that it is often hard to know when we are behind the scenes. Drawing on Sara Ahmed (2005), I argue that the public transcript and what lies 'behind' it are not straightforwardly there but are continuously made and remade through the state's violent transgressions. Sexual harassment from state representatives illustrates how the state's agenda and personal agendas are at times hard to distinguish. Was the state trying to fuck me or was Fred? Was the state denying me access or was Fred? With my analysis of painful and failed field experiences, I characterize an analytical redirection by force, arguing that we have reason to trouble our coding practices and pay further attention to the changing and incoherent character of the state's official agendas.

[45] 'Fred' is a pseudonym, and not the persons' real name.

Learning from failures

Numerous texts in qualitative methodology have engaged the productive value of events experienced as failures. Failed interviews have given rise to researchers rethinking their data, and their theoretical and methodological approaches (Nairn, Munro, and Smith 2005; King 2009; Bengtsson 2014; Roulston 2014; Levy, Halse, and Wright 2016). Respondents' refusal to participate have provided insights into their perspectives on power inequality and the role of research in mitigating the injustices that are the subjects of research (Toledo, Jenkins, and Oyarzo 2018). Failing to live up to the laws of the research country, and subsequently experiencing its law enforcement more intimately, has been described as useful data in its own right as well as an experience that allowed researchers to gain rapport with respondents more easily (Thomson 2011a; Harrowell, Davies, and Disney 2017).

Using Michael Taussig's phrase these situations may be termed moments of productive "disconcertion" (1993, 237). They highlight the importance of feeling in the making of ethnographic knowledge, and disconcert, trouble and rupture the thinking of the field researcher in a way that allows her to see things she could not see before (G. Rose 1997; Fujii 2015). George Marcus has gone as far as asserting that in contemporary anthropological studies, the empirical findings from fieldwork are decreasing in significance, producing "a derivative of the existing knowledge of others" (2006, 115). He asserts that the value of fieldwork in the process of producing ethnography may now be that it

> provides stimulation and ideas, but is relatively 'thin' in materials, […] it is the diffuse efforts to come to terms with the *lacks and failures* of fieldwork afterwards that provide the richest and 'thickest' materials" (ibid, *emphasis added*).

This paper does not share Marcus' perspective on successful fieldwork as likely to produce derivative knowledge, and the aim of this paper is not to rank my analysis of failure as thicker than ethnographies based on more access, than what I obtained. But like Marcus, I argue that there is analytical value in analyzing the moments where things go wrong. To make the argument that we can learn ethnographically from sexual harassment, I take my point of departure in Lee Ann Fujii's notion of "accidental ethnography" (Fujii 2015, 1). Fujii distinguishes between what she terms 'procedure-driven methods' or 'structured methods' and 'accidental ethnography' (Fujii 2015, 3). By procedure-driven or structured methods she refers to methods such as interviews, surveys, archival research, and planned participant observation. What defines these methods is that the researcher has planned ahead whom to talk to, what questions to ask and what prompts to use.

> With accidental ethnography, moments of insight arise by happenstance or chance. The researcher cannot control their content or timing; she can only learn to observe and record her observations in more systematic fashion (Fujii 2015, 2–3).

What systematizes the data produced through accidents is how the researcher treats it. Small observations that initially seem unrelated to the topic of research may in this way be read with an emphasis on what they suggest about the larger political and social world of the research context. Fujii is not alone in arguing that singular instances contribute meaningfully to the production of ethnographic knowledge. David Trigger et al. term them "revelatory moments" (Trigger, Forsey, and Meurk 2012, 513). Discussing James Fernandez argument that anthropology begins with "revelatory incidents" defined as highly charged events in human relationships that are "pregnant with meaning" (1986, 215), they argue that revelatory moments do not necessarily happen during highly dramatic social events. Mundane events too can prompt revelations for the researcher during fieldwork, and their emphasis is on the role of the researcher's emotions in the production of ethnographic knowledge. The argument reads as if what disciplines the researcher's intuition, allowing her to recognize the right moment as revelatory, is long-term immersion.[46] She first learns to experience the research context, and then learns, through her revelatory moment, to experience it in new ways. The form of autoethnography they describe is thus tightly related to the researcher self as situated in the research context. This form differs from other examples of autoethnography, where the researcher starts with her own relation to the subject – for example eating disorders – and uses an analysis of her own experiences to engage with it as a cultural phenomenon (Spry 2001; Ellis 1995). In Trigger et al.'s examples, autoethnographic insight is one out of many forms of data gathered through what may be termed traditional long-term ethnographic fieldwork.

In contrast, Fujii argues that the insistence on long-term immersion overlooks that scholars, who spend less time in the field, regularly report surprises (Wood 2009; Fujii 2015). She instead proposes other methods for disciplining and systematizing ways of handling accidental moments occurring during field research. Paying attention to accidental moments involves, what Michael Burawoy has called "explicit consciousness" (1998, 6). Burawoy introduces this term in his discussion of a method he calls 'the extended case method' (ibid, 4). Part of what is extended in this method is the reach of the theoretical framing of the research.

> Theory is essential to each dimension of the extended case method. It guides interventions, it constitutes situated knowledge into social processes, and it locates those social processes in their wider context of determination (ibid, 21).

What is made explicit in 'explicit consciousness' is thus the role of theory in shaping what the researcher experiences. In this way, the arguments of both Burawoy and Fujii are in favor of continuous reflexivity in order to make researchers constantly aware of their implicit assumptions. Practically, Fujii describes this process as starting by noticing stories and encounters that catch the researcher's attention. To the extent possible, she advocates writing observations down as they occur. What

[46] The argument is presented in defence of long-term immersion against Marcus' critique.

surprises you at one stage of field research may seem trivial later, as you become socialized to the norms and worldviews of the research site (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995), and keeping track of why you were surprised, and why you stopped being surprised is helpful in making your implicit assumptions explicit. Notes can be detailed or sketchy, descriptive or analytical. Their main purpose is to increase how systematically the researcher captures accidental moments on paper (Fujii 2015).

Fujii uses five of her own stories of accidental ethnography and writes that in some of the cases, she only wrote them down several years later when she thought back and saw their relevance for her analysis. When it comes to painful or failed field experiences, notes may similarly be taken quite a while after the situation occurred. In my case, I did take notes of conversations and encounters that were part of my sexually harassing field relationship, but the more uncomfortable I was with the situation, the less I wrote about what made me uncomfortable. Denial plays a huge part in how sexual harassment is experienced, and it may be hard for researchers to admit these instances because they make you feel unprofessional and incapable (Moreno 1995; I. Clark and Grant 2015; Kloß 2016). With regards to research concerning painful topics, specifically violence in Palestine, Brendan Browne has described how his fieldnotes helped him "writ[e] the wrongs" (2018, 187). He proposes to use journaling, writing down feelings of, for example, guilt and frustration as a way of "attending to the self" (ibid, 199), and a way to reflect on the violence experienced in "real time" (ibid, 200), in contrast to the amnesiac aspects of how violence is polished by the memory when revisited from a place of safety. I find this argument compelling but have not always felt capable of taking notes in 'real time'. At times I have felt too paralyzed by fear and self-doubt to engage them in note form. When I was deported, I was given seven days to leave the country. In the week that led up to my deportation, I was awash with emotions and had a feeling that I would fall apart, if I was to sit down in front of a screen and feel them fully. Because I had this fear of breaking down, I deliberately abstained from taking notes, although I was encouraged by my supervisors to do so. Instead I had inner conversations in my head with an imagined sympathetic listener where I would repeat over and over how the deportation process was taking place. My motivation for presenting this aspect of my field experience is not to give the normative recommendation that researchers should not take notes and instead try to delve as deep as they can into their insanity. Rather, I suspect that I am not alone in having felt unable to write down the most difficult aspects of my field experiences or admitting to myself how afraid I was in the situation (see also Pollard 2009; Gentile 2013). In addition to this kind of motivation for not taking notes as instances occur, it may be ill advised in certain contexts to take notes during deportation. No one went through my luggage in Kigali's airport, but intelligence officers have done so in other research contexts (Gentile 2013).

In this way, accounts of failure in fieldwork may at times be the version remembered several days, weeks or months after the event. By definition a failure

is not systematically produced. The emotional life of the researcher during failure is another factor that influences how systematically they can be approached in different parts of the research process. Here, arguments from autoethnography may serve to explain the kind of ethnographic learning, I am describing. Carol Ellis et al. argue that when the term validity is applied to autoethnography, its context, meaning and utility is altered.

> We know that memory is fallible, that it is impossible to recall or report on events in language that exactly represents how those events were lived and felt; and we recognize that people who have experienced the 'same' event often tell different stories about what happened (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011; see also Tullis Owen et al. 2009).

Autoethnographers thus focus on plausibility rather than correspondence (see also Carey 2017), it should feel possible to the reader that the story *could* be true. In the words of Ken Plummer: "What matters is the way in which the story enables the reader to enter the subjective world of the teller—to see the world from her or his point of view, even if this world does not 'match reality'" (Plummer 2014, 401). In particular, autoethnographers ask: "How useful is the story?" and "To what uses might the story be put?" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). It is this analytical move I attempt to make by drawing on my experiences of sexual harassment and deportation and putting them to the use of discussing the surfaces of the state.

Critics of autoethnography have lamented Plummer's (and others') focus on the author's point of view as opposed to 'reality'. For example, Soyini Madison has argued that: "When the gaze is on one's own navel one cannot see the ground upon which one stands or significant others standing nearby" (Madison 2006, 321; see also Atkinson 1997; Gans 1999; Buzard 2003; Anderson 2006). But paying special attention to personal experience does not inevitably entail self-absorption. Rather, in the phrasing of Ellis, it can be a way to move "inward toward social change" (Ellis 2002, 399). The aim of autoethnography is not necessarily to make the story all about the researcher self, but to "open[…] up new ways of writing about social life" (Reed-Danahay 1997, 2–3).

This perspective brings me to the last step of Fujii's account of accidental ethnography, which is reflection. Analysis might involve figuring out how the researchers' own background knowledge shape their experience (Wolfinger 2002; Clifford and Marcus 2008), relating the situation to the political context in which it took place, or considering what other interpretations might have been possible. In my case, I consider, for example, the possibility that my uncertainty about the source of violence in my sexually harassing field relationship related to my status as a relatively inexperienced researcher. The purpose of these reflections is to link observations from accidental moments to other methods and data. Undertaking these steps, Fujii argues, will enable the researcher to "extract the general from the unique" (Burawoy 1998, 5) and by doing so, turn 'non-data' into usable data (Fujii 2015).

The steps proposed by Fujii are, by and large, the steps I propose for researchers

to learn ethnographically from sexual harassment or other experiences of failure. Analyzing these experiences together with other methods and data, we can put them to use in discussing larger questions related to our research contexts. This data does not have to be produced by the researcher herself but can consist of the findings of other field researchers, historical accounts, media accounts, and a range of other material available to researchers who find themselves failing to obtain usable or productive data in the field (see also J. A. Hamilton 2011). Sherry Ortner has argued that "the ethnographic stance" is as much an intellectual and moral positionality as it is a bodily process in the field (1995, 173). Drawing on this perspective, I argue that researchers who bring home relatively little in terms of self-produced data from the field, can use the ethnographic commitment to "thick description" (Geertz 2017, 3) in handling other sources. By thickness, I here refer to thorough contextualization (Ortner 1995; Greenhouse 2012; Stepputat and Larsen 2015), consisting for example of a description of the practices in which statements were made, historical context, or an analysis of an area's ongoing "crisis as context" (Vigh 2008, 8).

Research that hurts

While I would have strongly preferred, from both an epistemological and personal perspective, to have been way more successful in my field research, this section discusses the merits of what I call research that hurts. Research on social issues, I argue, does well to hurt, at least a little, in order to produce critical engagement with existing knowledge, and in my case, to communicate the effects of the violence studied. A similar point is made by Michael Ashkenazi and Fran Markowitz, who argue that the unsolicited sexual experiences of field researchers and the attending decrease in self-confidence provide insights because they give them a sense of embodied vulnerability. "They are forced to consider issues that they might have preferred to overlook" (Ashkenazi and Markowitz 1999, 15). This analytical redirection by force, I argue, may provide a response to Patti Lather and Maggie MacLure's critique that they themselves, and others who subscribe to poststructuralist theories, have failed in making a difference to the mundane practices of research. Reflecting on this issue, Lather ponders: "perhaps we have not *earned* our theory" (Lather 2010; cf. MacLure 2011, 998). As MacLure presents the problem:

> We have argued for new forms of relationality and responsibility, yet many of our "field" encounters are still regulated by liberal-humanist ethics and notions of "open" dialogue. This produces only knowledge that everyone can tolerate. And by forcing everyone to speak in the bland dialect of mutual regard, it suppresses idiom, diversity, affect, and conflict (MacLure 2011, 998).

In contrast, research that hurts bring to the fore diversity, affect and conflict. As

part of critical debates concerning empathetic engagement in qualitative research, Deborah Britzman (1997) has argued that to be "wounded by thought" (paraphrased by Lather 2000a, 17) is an ethical move. Her reasoning is opposed to the theoretical and methodological responses to troubles in social analysis, which tend to search for security by adjusting and improving qualitative methods. There is a tendency, she argues, to avoid the difficult story, to attempt to restore the good name of research with 'new' and 'better' methods. But research just "can't seem to get it right" (Britzman 1997, 35; see also Visweswaran 1994). In contrast, research that hurts does not provide solutions to the issues that haunt social analysis, such as questions of representation (Spivak 1988; Abu-Lughod 2000; Clifford et al. 2010), unequal positionalities in the research encounter (Narayan 1993; Kezar 2003), and the extractive character of research with people (Scheper-Hughes 1995; Sanford and Angel-Ajani 2006). It pays special attention to these difficult aspects of knowledge production in a deliberate attempt to make the reader uncomfortable, to produce less easily digestible accounts. Along similar lines of thinking Kamala Visweswaran's proposes to characterize 'Feminist Ethnography as Failure'(1994, 95). She argues in favor of presenting 'a failed account', meaning an account that acknowledges its gaps and fissures and the impossibility of full understanding or full representation. In Lather's characterization, this is a move out of the sort of "devotional scientism" that underwrites the "Christian-capitalist-industrialist creed" (2000a, 17). Instead, Lather argues for an analytical move toward what Friedrich Nietzsche termed a 'gay science' (Nietzsche 1974), which she proposes to be "a science based in the very splintering of the mechanisms of control and [...] scientific progress, reason and the over administered world" (Lather 2000a, 17; see also Halberstam 2011; Mountz et al. 2015). The argument, I make below, follow these lines of thinking to the extent that I emphasize my painful experiences, doubts and insecurities in field research without offering new and better approaches. With my text, I am inviting readers to take part in the space of uncertainty without always helping them exit it. Inspired by Visweswaran, MacLure and others, it is meant as an account that does not speak in the language of 'mutual regard' but interprets my research context through difficult field encounters. It shows that we learn something, not only from close and trusting field relationships, but also from the ways in which we are rejected in the field (Visweswaran 1994). In the text that follows, I do this by discussing what I term 'sexualized gatekeeping', negotiations of research access which imply a return of sexual favors.

Sexualized gatekeeping

The government in Rwanda, led by Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), is keen on controlling information in the country (Sundaram 2015; Reyntjens 2015b). As such, to do field research in Rwanda you need a lot of papers with a lot of stamps and signatures by important people (Thomson, Ansoms, and Murison 2012; Loyle 2016). The first fieldwork I did in Rwanda in 2013 was facilitated by the eager in

involvement of Fred. Fred was one of my first contacts in Rwanda. He works in a ministry position, and although his job does not relate to research permits, he was instrumental in securing my research access. Few days after landing in Rwanda on a tourist visa, I had the Ministry of Education's stamped approval of my research, and I am quite sure I would not have had it that quickly were it not for Fred's insistent calls and follow ups. While I had followed the guidelines in the application for a research permit, the process did not seem to be moving on without someone influential pushing it along. Fred is a very guarded man and did not immediately express his interest in me openly. In the beginning of our relationship, I had the impression that he was helping me a lot because he was my 'handler'. By 'handler' I mean a person from the government responsible for keeping tabs on me. It is a commonly shared assumption among my respondents in Rwanda and other researchers working in the country, that RPF issues handlers to researchers to follow up on their whereabouts and whether the research is secretly about something that may be harmful to the regime (Begley 2012; Bouka 2013; Sundberg 2016). Because I had reason to consider Fred my handler, I feared that keeping him too far at bay would expose me and my research to further scrutiny. I therefore saw him regularly in an attempt to hide in plain sight. Because of Fred's guarded behavior it came as a surprise to me when he one day tried to kiss me inside a taxi we were sharing. It seemed to come out of nowhere, and when I turned him down, he did not insist but tried to laugh it off as a joke. He never tried to kiss me again, but nor did he seem to fully let go of his interest in me. Looking back at the situation now, I interpret his actions as though he took my refusal to kiss him as me being coy, not as a sign of my lack of interest.

He would go long periods without talking to me, then contact me angrily for not reaching out to him more, then show great interest in everything I had to say. He would ask me about my input as a 'development professional' on different RPF policy initiatives, and I would give vague answers drawing parallels to how similar sounding policies were unpopular in Denmark or had failed in other countries. This back and forth made me feel like I was under a lot of pressure and my reaction was to make a lot of jokes, a behavior which he may have taken as flirtation from my side. One day in the fall of 2015, we had a peculiar lunch together where I wanted to ask him if he would follow up on my research permit, as he had done before. He, however, wanted to talk to me about his plans to get married before the end of the year.

He asked me how a person finds someone to marry. I answered that that seemed like a weird question to me. In my experience there were many women in Kigali looking to get married. "You go to church every Sunday", I said. "Don't people meet in the church all the time?". He said he did not know anyone he could marry and asked me whether I could help him.

It is not possible for me to say that I knew exactly what was going on during that lunch. I left it feeling confused and with a sense that Fred was creeping past my personal boundaries in a way that made me feel uncomfortable. This sense that he

was playing with how far he could go was an experience I had often had in our meetings. He once complained to me that it is difficult as a man to avoid becoming a father, and in this situation too he asked me for my advice. My response was a general comment on men making this form of complaint when they know well what measures to take in order not to impregnate women, and when the women who do get pregnant carry the bigger load of that consequence. These conversations felt like tests. It felt like I was walking a delicate balance between not encouraging Fred's advances and not severing my ties with him completely. And this experience seems to resemble other accounts of sexual harassment in field research. That is, of one or more of the field's gatekeepers demanding sexual favors in return for access (Moreno 1995; I. Clark and Grant 2015; Kloß 2016). Leanne Johansson describes her research in the borderlands of Nigeria and Cameroon as spending "the year ducking and diving sexual encounters, massaging bruised egos and trying to keep in the good books of powerful men whose expectations of exchange I was not willing to fulfil" (2015, 58).

Less than two months after our strangely charged lunch, Fred got married in his local sector offices and subsequently invited me to attend his more formal wedding. Why he had his heart set on marrying before the end of the year, and why he told me he didn't know anyone he could marry when he was able to find someone to marry so quickly is still unclear to me. While I am not sure at all, I have the impression that he was trying to see what I would think of him getting married, and whether I might be interested in being the bride. So much in Rwanda is said indirectly and discretely, especially when it comes to politics and sex (de Lame 2004; Ingelaere 2010a; Uwanziga 2015; Purdeková 2016). In many of my encounters with RPF officials in different functions, I have not been sure of whether the person was trying to extract information from me or seduce me. More often than not, I think they were trying to do both. Rwanda has a long historical tradition of interpreting female sexuality as deliberate intelligence maneuvers (Codere 1973; Jefremovas 1991; C. C. Taylor 1999; Des Forges 2011). In this framing, there is a fluid line between sex work and intelligence work, and I have often heard other women described as deliberately seducing powerful men for information and political favors. The perspective on female sexuality as something that is used instrumentally to obtain information recalls the way Russian women have often been portrayed in Hollywood cinema (Radović 2014). In my experience, this image was shared by many of my respondents, some of whom told me that I came off as a Russian spy and compared me to the ambiguously situated character played by Angelina Jolie in the movie *Salt*.

Thus, I felt that in many of my relations with the public officials I encountered in my tour around offices trying to obtain my research permit, I was being typed as a two-faced trickster, "one who seems to be what [s]he is not, and one who professes faith in what [s]he does not believe" (Bohannan 1964, 290). Of course, this description is not far from the practices undertaken by field researchers in general (Visweswaran 1994; Metcalf 2002; Meijl 2005; Coleman 2015), and by researchers

navigating the conditions in Rwanda in particular (Begley 2012; Thomson, Ansoms, and Murison 2012; Purdeková 2015; Sundberg 2016; Loyle 2016). What was painful to me was the experience of being typed as a sexualized trickster. Of being treated like offering sex in exchange for access was something we all agreed was on the table. Like my hesitance and resistance to advances were deliberate ploys to increase my allure. While I had the distinct impression that many of the men I encountered in ministry offices communicated this to me, in most of these encounters "I find 'I cannot easily say'" (O. Jones 2005, 215; Horton 2008, 364) what was going on. Uncertainty and insecurity are central features of sexual harassment (Kloß 2016; B. C. Williams 2017). The build up to violations plays around boundaries, and as argued by Ashkenazi and Markowitz (1999), your self-confidence falters, which makes you unsure of your ability to interpret the message (see also Moreno 1995; Cupples 2002; I. Clark and Grant 2015; Johansson 2015; Kloß 2016).

What I do know is that the next time I tried to follow up on my permit, Fred told me to contact the Ministry of Education, an advice with so little new information, I took it as an indication that he no longer wished to be involved. He contacted me a few months after, asking if I could help a male foreign national get a research permit. He was a friend of his and had done research in Rwanda before. Fred would like to help him get a permit, but he did not know the nitty gritty parts of the procedure, which forms to fill and so on, an aspect that he knew that I was well-versed in. Could I help by sending a list of what Fred needed to provide his friend in order for him to get research access?

Whose violence is it anyway?

Apart from the time he tried to kiss me, Fred's transgression of my boundaries was not physical. I would describe it as "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 140), an act of violence because it constrains those subjected to it, and symbolic as it is achieved without overt acts of force or coercion (Lawler 2011). Moreover, this form of violence may be characterized as an act of closure. In their discussion of researching closure within US immigration detention and military institutions, Oliver Belcher and Lauren Martin ask:

> If research access is not denied or withheld by an explicit action, if closure is the result of overwork, neglect or incompetence rather than coherent policy, how do we understand the openness/closure of state agencies? (Belcher and Martin 2013, 409).

Adding sexual harassment to this list, I here want to characterize the form of closure practiced in my research experience as illustrative of a form of state violence that does not reflect a uniform state with a clearly identifiable objective. To begin with, the Ministry of Youth and ICT (MYICT) and the National University of Rwanda both signed off on my research permit. If there was a grand plan from the state that

no one was allowed to research the Iwawa Rehabilitation Centre, there was no reason for both these state institutions to allow my application to go forward. The ministry could have refused to work with me again by referencing the fact that I had not made my master's thesis available to them, although this was one of the stated requirements in my first permit. The National University of Rwanda could have refused to clear me ethically, as my planned research inquired into sensitive aspects of my respondents' lives. But both institutions gave me their stamps and signatures, and thus, I formally had everything I needed to obtain a research permit.

But the rehabilitation center, I was applying to continue to research, is a sensitive topic in Rwanda. The island on which it lies is placed critically by the border of Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country Rwanda with which has a tense relationship (Prunier 2010; Stearns 2011). It has been described by MYICT as a place for 'delinquent' male youth to undergo long term rehabilitation (1-3 years in my interviews), but has also been rumored to hold opposition politicians in the time leading up to elections (Gettleman 2010).[47] Moreover, the times leading up to elections are marked by more frequent arrests and detention of young men loitering on the streets (Amnesty International 2017; HRW 2018a). My proposed research was set to take place from July 2015 to June 2016, and it was during this period that an election was held to change the constitution and allow President Paul Kagame to run for the office again in 2017. My interpretation of the situation is that these are some of the reasons that obtaining a research permit was not a straight forward matter, and that it would have taken some additional form of involvement to move the process along. The involvement that Fred had undertaken during my first research.

Returning to Belcher and Martin's question and modifying it slightly, I want to discuss how we frame violence that comes from state representatives, not as part of a coherent policy and not solely carried out in defense of the state's interests, but not clearly distinct from these interests either? Returning to Scott's notion of the public transcript and what lies behind it, I argue that we cannot always neatly separate the two. Even when everyone involved in a political project represents RPF and reports to the central government, the public transcript and the state's surfaces are unstable and sometimes inscrutable.

What counts as 'official'?

During my deportation process, the intelligence officer, who carried out interviews with me, informed me of my deportation, confiscated my passport and handed it back to me at the airport, kept moving the goal posts. To begin with, he phrased the issue as a simple request for me to confirm my relation to the company with

[47] An employee in one of the tourist companies doing boat tours near the island motivated his suspicion that this was the case by telling me that the local military chapter forbade them from doing tours on the lake in this period.

which I had a residence permit. When I did this, I needed to undergo questioning about my whereabouts and whether I might have been undertaking illegal research. After questioning, he informed me that I had seven days to leave the country and that I was to understand the deportation as the answer to my application for a research permit. "The application is illegal", I remember him telling me. When I asked him how the application itself could be illegal, he hesitated and seemed to question whether he had used the right phrases. He then told me: "It is illegal for you to do research without a permit". When he subsequently confiscated my passport, he said that I would get it back when I returned to the 'Office for Inspection of Foreigners' showing my plane ticket to leave the country. The next day I came back showing my plane ticket, but he refused to give me my passport. I would get it back at the airport, he told me. When I complained that he had told me I would get it back by showing him my ticket, his brief and closing answer was "no". I left unsure of whether he was denying having said this, or whether he just wanted to communicate to me that the answer to my various complaints was "no".

It may be argued that among the mixed messages, I received in the process of applying for a research permit and being deported, I should have been able to read between the lines and understand that I was never going to get it. That in spite of contradictions, the people who were really in control, not the lower ranking MYICT officials or employees at the university, were not going to allow this kind of research at that time. That if I had been a more experienced researcher, I would have been able to see the work of the Rwandan "shadow state" (Verhoeven 2012, 273) and sift through unimportant messages to get to the real message. Maybe it didn't matter what term the intelligence officer used to describe the crime that caused my deportation, or that in the end, I didn't really feel that he had finished conceptualizing it. Instead of focusing on the disorder I found in the Rwandan state's "speech acts" (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998, 28), maybe I should be analyzing the order of "acts that speak" (Jensen and Stepputat 2013, 215; Grant 2015b).

This view of governance has been presented to me by some of my respondents in Rwanda. In their interpretations of seemingly contradictory political actions, they ascribe them to the hidden plans of RPF, or specifically President Paul Kagame. When I interviewed young men who had been arrested and sent to rehabilitation on Iwawa, eventhough they were able to present a valid identity card (ID) and were in stable employment at the time of the arrest (a positionality which does not fit any of the criteria for rehabilitation presented to me by state representatives or available in written sources),[48] they explained this by saying that the local police and military personnel in the area were obligated by the central government to arrest a certain number of hutu each month, whether they had an ID or not. Hutu is one of Rwanda's three historical ethnicities. Groups of extremist hutu attempted

[48] Such as (MYICT 2012; WDA 2013; NYC 2016; Rwanda Military Hospital 2017; Tumwebaze 2017).

to rid Rwanda of ethnic tutsi in 1994, and ethnic hutu have been exposed to a range of different discriminative political practices under RPF, whose leadership is heavily influenced by ethnic tutsi from the Ugandan diaspora (Pottier 2002; Thomson 2013; Chakravarty 2016a; Purdeková, Reyntjens, and Wilén 2018). This interpretation seemed more and more compelling to me, the more men I talked to in the area and other areas with high numbers of hutu residents, who had similar stories of arrest and similar suspicions about the real underlying meaning of arrest. The interpretation shares Scott's distinction between "the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen" (Scott 2007, 200, *original emphasis*) and their actual practices; what the portrait is masking (Scott 1990). It seems to fit well within a conceptualization of the 'official state' and the 'shadow state' in Rwanda.

However, I want to draw attention to our participation as researchers in helping RPF produce its 'public transcript' by sorting through what we count as 'official', and what we place 'behind the scenes'. By metaphorically reading between the lines, we ignore the lines, the contradictions and incoherencies, yet these constitute an important part of how the state presents itself both in Rwanda and elsewhere. Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo et al. (2017) present their analytical choices of what they count as official explicitly, and I therefore choose this text to discuss the tendency. Nzahabwanayo's doctoral research concerned the *itorero* program, which is RPF's short-term encamped civic education for secondary school graduates (Nzahabwanayo 2016). He describes having observed in participant observation that trainers in *itorero* recruited the participants to RPF. Higher ranking ministry officials in charge of the program, however, disputed that RPF recruited during *itorero* and dismissed the observation as particular examples of uninformed trainers (Nzahabwanayo, Horsthemke, and Mathebula 2017, 10). The authors make the analytical choice to characterize the higher-ranking official's explanation as the 'official' version of RPF and the observation of a contradiction as 'practices on the ground'.[49] In problematizing this coding practice, I am arguing in favor of troubling what we count as the "surfaces" (Purdeková 2015, 248) of the state, and what counts as 'behind the scenes' or 'on the ground practices'? Inspired by Sarah Ahmed, I propose that surfaces, and with them the distinction between 'on stage' and 'behind the scenes' are continuously constituted (2005), in this case by state violence. Theorizing surfaces, Ahmed describes how the very distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' is brought into being by the ongoing and changing boundary formations, in a "maintenance-through-transgression" (ibid, 102). Using this lens, we may see the transgressive practices of the state and its representatives as continuously making and remaking the surfaces or boundaries of the state. When the state in so many of its practices 'impose, extract and demean' (Purdeková 2015, 235), how do we know when these practices are tied to the state's project and when it relates to the personal agendas of its representatives? Nzahabwanayo him-

[49] Molly Sundberg similarly terms RPF recruitment during *itorero* training 'unofficial', as the recruiters were not present on the written schedule (Sundberg 2016, 81)

self mentions that "the vast majority of participants emphasize that in many training sites, trainers sexually abuse young girls undergoing the *Itorero* training" (Nzahabwanayo 2016, 224–25). The research of Tim Williams et al. include similar cases of sexual abuse by teachers of young women and girls during public primary and secondary education (T. P. Williams, Binagwaho, and Betancourt 2012). Harassment and abuse are, I argue, ways in which the state imposes itself and makes itself present in the lives of those subjected to its rule. Whether we are talking about trainers recruiting to RPF during civic education or teachers practicing sexual abuse, they come into their students' lives in an official capacity. They teach their students in the official spaces of the state and the line between the official and the unofficial practices is often blurry. The uncertainty about the source of violence I described above is not unique to my experiences. It features in many ethnographic accounts, wherein people describe the Rwandan state as "unpredictable" (Sundberg 2016, 211), and their relationship with it as marked by "extreme uncertainty" (Chakravarty 2016a, 182). By making the interpretive choice to consider some transgressing practices unofficial, we sort through and clean up experiences in the meeting with the state, which are often filled with contradictions, uncertainties and holes in the descriptions of policy. The neatness and tidiness we attribute to the Rwandan state (e.g. Straus and Waldorf 2011a; Stys 2012; Purdeková 2013; S. Turner 2014; Løvgren and Turner 2019) are in part produced in our writings. *We* write the public transcript, not only because we as researchers use the term, but because of our analytical choices to read coherence and order from messy experiences.

In Bert Ingelaere's analysis of the difficulty of producing reliable knowledge in Rwanda, he argues that public officials practice self-censorship because they do not want to contradict the public transcript (2010). Additionally, I have had the experience during my first fieldwork, that most lower-level state representatives in different ways connected to Iwawa were anxious about talking to me because they were unsure of what the official policy, the public transcript, was to begin with. They would contradict themselves in interviews about factual issues, such as how long arrested men waited in transit centers before being transferred to Iwawa, and seemed unsure of what the right answer was supposed to be. With this paper, I therefore argue for an interpretive turn towards including more mess in our characterization of the state in Rwanda. Some of my most significant encounters with the Rwandan state were mediated by Fred. In the processes of obtaining my research permit and failing to obtain it, I cannot easily distinguish what was Fred's agenda and what was the state's agenda.

Similarly blurred boundaries between personal and state agendas feature in many other fieldwork accounts. In Catharine Newbury's research on the implementation of the *imidugudu* villagization policy, she notes a tendency for land to be coopted by military personnel (C. Newbury 2011; see also Hilhorst and Van Leeuwen 2000). In Chris Huggins' analysis of the land reform, local authorities accept bribes and/or reward land to their close relatives (2011). Anuradha Chakravarty's research show

how bribes thoroughly affected the legal processes in *gacaca*, Rwanda's transitional courts that tried genocide crimes (2016a). Will Rollason's ethnography of motorcycle taxi drivers in Kigali describes an arrest of a cooperative leader, which reads as though this man was arrested as the result of a competing cooperative leader bribing the police (2017).

Research concerning the genocide in 1994 has gone to great lengths to show that murders were not only or mainly motivated by the state's decree to kill based on ethnic hatred. Conflicts between neighbors over plots of land, individual grabs at power, and anger from scorned men played a major part in the multiplication of violence (Des Forges 1999; C. C. Taylor 1999; L. L. Rose 2007; Fujii 2009; Longman 2010; C. Newbury 2011). Less attention is given to this aspect of politics in contemporary Rwanda. For example, while both Nzahabwanayo and Newbury show the prevalence of military and other state personnel merging their own interests with the state's agenda, they still analyze this agenda in the framing of "bureaucratic logic" (C. Newbury 2011, 226) or "indoctrination" (Nzahabwanayo 2016, 21) of the RPF values. Scholars analyzing the blurry boundaries between state and society in Rwanda tend to focus on the state's cooptation of individuals (Stys 2012; Adamczyk 2012; Sundberg 2016; Purdeková, Reyntjens, and Wilén 2018), and pay little to no analytical attention to the way the state's policies are coopted by individuals. In such process of criticizing the government, these analyses ignore the differing personal agendas of public servants and the ways these agendas shape the many faces of RPF's mission and official policy. I venture that if we pay more analytical attention to this aspect of how state violence works, we may trouble the narrative that RPF's Rwanda is "a political system relatively free of rent extraction" (T. P. Williams 2019, 4). Fighting corruption is a highly important neo-liberal development indicator and appears to play a significant part in legitimizing RPF violence in the eyes of its major donors (Beswick 2011; Zorbas 2011; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; OECD 2013; DFID 2013; World Bank 2015; Marriage 2016). Given that Rwanda's donors contribute an estimated 40%[50] (Jessee 2017, 12) to the national budget, it matters concretely and monetarily how we conceptualize state violence and whether we pay attention to the different ways in which many RPF officials are for sale.

Conclusion

Margaret Werry and Róisín O'Gorman have argued that "[f]ailure is symptomatic of a current order" (2012, 106). In this paper, I have argued that we can learn ethnographically from our experiences of failure by analyzing what these symptoms say about the order we are trying to understand. In particular, I have examined my doubts, insecurities and uncertainties in the process of a sexually harassing field relationship followed by deportation to highlight the instability of the state's

[50] 50% according to Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (2011,12)

surfaces. By drawing on other forms of data and the research of others, I have argued that my personal experience is not unique and argued for an interpretive turn towards characterizing the violences of the state in Rwanda as more messy and disordered than what is reflected in the analytical preference for using Scott's works on power. I have proposed the term 'research that hurts' to describe this form of analysis. The term refers to the emphasis on painful field experiences, research that hurts the researcher and the researched, and to the intention of discomforting, disconcerting, or more plainly, hurting the reader. These two facets are motivated by a poststructuralist approach to social analysis where, firstly, I follow Visweswaran, Lather, MacLure and others in arguing that diversity, affect and conflict between researcher and researched in field encounters are important aspects of knowledge production. Rather than downplaying their role or try to salvage the good name of research with new methods, I argue for the value of maintaining the discomfort they produce, as they may keep alerting us to the inherent conflicts included in doing research. This is not to say that there are no ways to improve research practice (see for example Boesten and Henry 2018), but to illustrate that it is not always a simple matter of moving from "Fieldwork that failed" to "Learning from mistakes" (cf. Visweswaran 1994, 97). In the framing of Gayatri Spivak, I have therefore tried to characterize a knowledge practice that "question[s] the authority of the investigating subject without paralyzing him, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility" (Spivak 2006, 276). Transforming the condition of impossibility into possibility is not meant to be a story of "success-in-failure" (Visweswaran 1994, 98), where the failure only appears to be so, but in reality is part of the journey towards success. The sentiment is put succinctly by Karamo Brown, who, in an episode of *Queer Eye* quotes his grandmother for saying: "Failure is not the opposite of success. It's part of it" ("The Handyman Can" 2018). This assurance is not what I am trying to communicate. There are ways to know more about my research context than what I learned from sexual harassment and deportation, and no part of it felt like a success. Paraphrasing Judith Halberstam, I would characterize it as a story wherein I 'lost and in losing imagined other goals' (Halberstam 2011, 88). These other goals include the hope that this story might inspire more analytical attention to the sexually transgressive practices of the state in Rwanda.

7. Politics of Patience. Acceptance, agency and compliance in Rwanda (article 4)

Abstract

This paper analyzes practices of patience, acceptance and compliance in Rwanda, and the agency expressed in these modes of being. It is motivated by the concern that although multiple actors practice both overt and covert resistance in Rwanda, there are important aspects of how subjects relate to power and violence, which are omitted in the analytical tendency to emphasize the ways people subvert political control. The paper analyzes situations where radical acceptance, which entails not only obeying orders but feeling calm in doing so, is framed as an essential attitude for surviving extreme hardships. In other situations, patience and compliance are described as responses to the cunning of political and other forms of authority, who want to trick my respondents into making themselves arrestable. Patience, in general, may be understood as a way to navigate the infinitely possible futures of a political context marked by the often arbitrary exercise of sovereign violence. In this context of ubiquitous threat, the state becomes not only a source of violence, but a real or imagined resource in identifying the possible dangers coming from intimate relations. To understand these shifts in relations to sovereignty, the paper ends by reading Ashis Nandy's fragmented selves together with Seyla Benhabib's narrative model to characterize patient subjectivities marked by adaptability to drastic radical change. Agency in this view is expressed in control over ones narrative, even if this narrative is contradictive or exhibits attachment to subordinating structures.

Key words: Patience, acceptance, compliance, agency, violence, state, authority, Rwanda

Introduction

This paper sets out to characterize certain forms of political subjectivity in Rwanda. By political subjectivity, I mean how people relate to power and authority, as well as the role played by structures of power in forming subjective experiences (Schramm and Krause 2011). I term the practices relating to these expressions of subjectivity 'Politics of Patience' because my analysis centers on compliance and the role played by patience and acceptance in these practices. Political subjectivity in Rwanda is a highly disputed topic because it relates to the operations of the country's current government, which are a source of great conflict among scholars, international development institutions and the government itself (e.g. Pottier 2002; Clark and Kaufman 2009; Gready 2010; Beswick 2010; Straus and Waldorf

2011; Reyntjens 2011; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012). The current government in Rwanda is led by Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), who has been in power since its military branch overthrew the previous government in 1994, following several years of armed conflict and a devastating genocide. This makes it the longest sitting government since the country's independence in 1962. The RPF government has been characterized as highly effective in enforcing its policies and "determined to the point of ruthlessness" (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012, 15). In this context of coercive governance, some observers have commented on what they perceive to be "the extremely low level of resistance or challenge that he [President Paul Kagame] faces from the Rwandan population" (Marriage 2016, 46). Political culture in Rwanda has been analyzed with an emphasis on "docility" (Uvin 2002, 167) "lack of agency" (Stys 2012, 717), "self-policing" (Goodfellow 2013, 436), "uncritical obedience" (Nzahabwanayo, Horsthemke, and Mathebula 2017, 242), and an ancient Rwandan tradition of "*irivuze umwami*" ("what[ever] the king said" cf. Mulindahabi 2015, 172; see also Cart 1995).

These characterizations have not sat well with a number of ethnographers, who in response have highlighted the subtleties of resistance, especially among Rwanda's rural population (Huggins 2009; Thomson 2013; Ingelaere 2014; Van Damme, Ansoms, and Baret 2014; Breed 2015; Ansoms and Cioffo 2016; Jessee 2017; Berry 2017). James Scott's concepts of 'weapons of the weak', and discrete resistance in the space between the public and the hidden transcripts (Scott 2000, 1990), have been especially popular. Scott's public transcript is defined as "the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen" (Scott 2007, 200, *original emphasis*). The hidden transcript is then understood as a the off stage situation, "where subordinates may gather outside the intimidating gaze of power [and] a sharply dissonant political culture is possible" (Scott 2007, 201). Scott's frameworks have been useful for analyzing the delicate balance undertaken by those who oppose e.g. Rwanda's reconciliation policies, allowing them to express their dissent without suffering arrest, imprisonment or death (Thomson 2013).[51]

However, this paper is inspired by Lila Abu-Lughod's (1990) and Saba Mahmood's (2011) critiques of analytical lenses that "romanticize resistance" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42). Both those who lament the lack of resistance, and those who argue that it is present in the 'hidden transcript' seem to be working within a binary understanding of how subjects relate to power (Mahmood 2011). That is, characterizing subjects as either resisting or being passively subjected to power. In paying special attention to practices of compliance, I do not deny the existence in Rwanda of subtle expressions of resistance, nor more explicitly expressed acts of resistance. Indeed, acts of covert and overt resistance are carried out by a variety of actors in Rwanda (see for example Uvin 1998; Pells 2011; Shearer 2015; Purdeková 2015).

While I understand the motivation of wanting to honor brave resisters who, for

[51] For a similar analytical approach to the subtleties of resistance outside of the Rwandan context see (Mbembe 1992; B. Johnson 1994; Certeau 1997; Girman 2004; MacLure et al. 2010).

example, speak openly about the injustices of agricultural policies on the radio (Sundaram 2015), and to the whispers of dissent expressed through the clever use of double connotations (de Lame 2004; Ingelaere 2010a; Thomson 2013; Purdeková 2016), I argue that we should be more wary of prioritizing these expressions of political subjectivity. There is, I argue, an implicit hierarchical ranking of subject performance entailed in our special attention to resistance. By ignoring practices of compliance or insisting that they secretly reflect resistance, our analyses risk foreclosing "certain questions about the workings of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42). The aim of this paper is to open up a space for questions related to political subjectivity that are currently undertheorized. Specifically, political subjectivity expressed in patience, acceptance and compliance, as well as the agency enacted in these attitudes.

The paper proceeds by firstly describing my methodological approach and presenting contextual information about the following discussions. Afterwards, I begin by analyzing a story where one of my respondents, whom I will refer to as 'Gilles',[52] argued for the value of acceptance and patience. The rest of the paper explores the themes the story engages. I relate Gilles' perspective of acceptance as a matter of life and death to the perspectives of some of my other respondents who have described being calm as method to survive extreme hardships. To analyze the agency expressed in these attitudes, I use Seyla Benhabib's "narrative model" (1999, 337) and argue in favor of understanding acceptance as agency. Gilles moreover describes a tense form of patience that responds to real or imagined provocations from others in authority positions, which I relate to cultural practices of testing. Finally, Gilles' story involves the conscription of state violence in intimate relations as a real or imagined resource, which is the subject of analysis in the following section. Tying these different threads together at the end of the paper, I draw on Ashis Nandy's theorizing of fragmented and shifting selves with "a certain permeability of boundaries" (1983, 107) to characterize the forms of political subjectivity involved in politics of patience.

Methodology and background

The approach of this paper is to analyze a set of different situations, where I, in a research capacity, have encountered practices of patience, acceptance and compliance in Rwanda. These situations arose during my three months of research about the Iwawa Rehabilitation Centre for my masters in 2013-2014 and my ten months of attempted continual of this research for my PhD in 2015-2016, which ended in deportation. While these situations stand alone, the paper argues that they are telling of larger stories of politics of patience. That is, I analyze these singular instances with a view to "extract the general from the unique" (Burawoy, 1998: 5). The methodological move is not to move from empirical material to theory by

[52] All names of persons are changed for this paper.

generalization. Rather, I approach my empirical material with an explicit theoretical intention of highlighting different expressions of political subjectivity than the ones captured in frameworks emphasizing resistance. In this way, when I claim to be telling a larger story about politics of patience, the intention is not to portray political culture in Rwanda as such. The larger story co-exists with multiple other ways in which people relate to power and authority in Rwanda.

I contextualize these singular situations using statistics, media reports, popular songs, and ethnographic arguments based on fieldwork of other researchers working in Rwanda. Some examples presented in this paper occurred in urban contexts and some in rural. Some included older people and some younger, some were men, and some were women. The paper does not attempt to present a full picture of what life is in any of these contexts, or to argue that patience and acceptance mean the same to these differently situated people. It focuses on analyzing the themes of patience and acceptance, as I encountered them in these situations, and exploring their uses, meanings and nuances. People who are patient and accepting in one context may be carrying out overt resistance in another. What this paper intends is to characterize the political work of patience without claiming to represent the relations of my respondents to power overall.

For the discussions that follow two sets of background information are relevant. The first is about the Iwawa Rehabilitation Centre, which is placed on Iwawa Island in Lake Kivu. It detains male youth termed 'delinquent' (MYICT 2012) for periods of 1-3 years and consists of moral rehabilitation and vocational skills training. Moral rehabilitation in turn consists of military training without weapons and civic education about Rwanda's history and the RPF's values for citizens. Many state officials emphasize the center's role in combatting drug abuse, but the practices for arrest center on young men 'loitering' on the streets. In my interviews with graduates from the center, the island features as a place strongly associated with death (Løvgren and Turner 2019). Death from beatings from the military commanders or other trainees, death from starvation or untreated diseases, and death from suicide.

The second set of background information concerns ethnicity in Rwanda. There have historically been three ethnic groups in Rwanda, hutu, tutsi and twa. No reliable statistics on the size of each group exist (Uvin 2002), but hutu make out the majority, following a smaller group of tutsi, and finally twa, who are estimated to make up around one percent of the population (Des Forges 1999, 37). From the late 1950s to 1994, extremist hutu have held power in Rwanda and an extremist hutu-led government organized the genocide in 1994, where an estimated 5-800,000 tutsi, as well as hutu and twa opposing the killing campaigns were murdered (Des Forges 1999; Straus 2008). The genocide ended with the government overthrow by RPF, mainly comprised of tutsi from the Ugandan diaspora (Purdeková, Reyntjens, and Wilén 2018) in July 1994. On their way to seize power and in the years following the genocide, RPF troops are estimated to have killed 3-400,000 hutu as part of military battles and in revenge missions

(Davenport and Stam 2009; Lemarchand 2018). In today's Rwanda it is in practice illegal to refer to ethnic identities, but ethnic tensions are rife, especially because a number of RPF policies discriminate against hutu or complicate life in rural areas, where hutu make up the majority of the population (Hilker 2009; Ingelaere 2010b; Ansoms 2013; Chakravarty 2016a). Having drawn up the contextual background, I turn now to my analysis of politics of patience.

Encouraging acceptance

In early 2016, a young man in his twenties, Gilles, was trying to explain a Kinyarwanda concept of gratitude and debt to me, and the conversation turned to intergenerational conflicts about what a son owes his father or his guardians. He was currently worried about the safety of one of his friends, Damian, because of an inheritance dispute. As the story was relayed to me, Damian had lost his parents in the 1994 genocide and had been brought up by his uncle. According to Gilles, the uncle had been complaining about the expenses of raising Damian all through his childhood and constantly reminded the child that he was going out of his way to raise him although he was not his son. But as Damian was now growing older, he began to discover that his parents had owned large acres of land before their death, which according to Rwandan inheritance laws and traditions would mean that the land belonged to him (Musahara and Huggins 2005). He began to make trips out to the rural areas, where he supposedly had land, and made inquiries with the local population about what acres used to belong to his parents. Every time he came home from such a trip, however, he became violently ill, had a high fever and was vomiting convulsively. Damian was being poisoned by someone working with his uncle, Gilles told me.

Intergenerational conflicts over land and resources are not infrequently sources of violence in Rwanda. Rwanda is densely populated and has seen several mass migrations out of and subsequently into the country, in relation to the violent conflicts and the genocide taking place since 1959. Significantly, in recent years Rwanda has undergone extensive political land reform effectively redistributing land from smallholders to large scale farmers, following the logic that the latter can better utilize and invest in the land (Pottier 2002; Musahara and Huggins 2005; C. Newbury 2011; Ansoms 2013; Huggins 2014). Given that an estimated 90% of the population rely on agriculture for survival (Ingelaere 2014), land disputes can easily turn into life or death conflicts and poisonings are often suspected to be the cause of death (M. Shyaka 2007).[53]

Gilles now repeated the advice, he had given Damian, to me; he had told him to

[53] Susanne Buckley-Zistel has proposed interpreting poisonings as a continual of genocidal violence: "the perception of deaths by poisoning is high, yet impossible to certify" (Buckley-Zistel 2006, 145).

let the issue be. There was no reason to risk his life over something that might not amount to anything, given that many people in the family – not just his uncle – might try to obstruct him from getting it. "You are not the only orphan who suffered from this genocide, and you are definitely not the one who suffered the most"[54] he told me, as if to illustrate how the conversation had gone. "You still have a chance to build something from scratch, but if you lose your life you have nothing". I nodded in agreement. The story reminded me of many other situations and stories I have encountered as part of my research and my personal life in Rwanda, where people in precarious negotiations assess the different threats to their life. I felt in the situation that Gilles was right to caution his friend to accept the situation and I interjected that the friend should also be careful that his uncle did not have him arrested by the police in an effort to get rid of him. To this, Gilles responded enthusiastically: "Yes! And you know, they [elder relatives] like to provoke us to do something that gives them a reason to have us arrested. They may keep insulting you, hoping that you will finally explode".

In analyzing Gilles' story, I follow Mahmood in emphasizing how "agentival capacity is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms" (Mahmood 2011, 15). By the time Gilles told me this story, I had come to share his perspective that it was likely life threatening for a young man to be in a conflict over land with his uncle, and his normative assessment that continuing the conflict was not worth such a risk. By adding my own fear that the uncle might work with the police to have him arrested for a made-up offence, he added his understanding of what was at stake when he and other young men like him were in conflict with older authority figures; that 'the authorities' like to test them. Bert Ingelaere (2014), Molly Sundberg (2016) and Andrea Purdeková (2016) have in different ways analyzed how "authorities" (Ingelaere 2014, 215) in Rwanda is a concept used to cover a range of different representatives of state power. In these analyses, due to the pervasive presence of state infrastructure in almost all aspects of life, authority figures appear as a diffuse group of people officially or unofficially connected to or collaborating with the state (Sundberg 2016; Purdeková 2016). This understanding of authority resembles the uses of my respondents and I will continue to use it this way throughout the paper.

When Gilles advised Damian to accept his loss of inheritance and let the issue be, he first emphasized that the likely alternative was losing his life. In this case, the loss of life was related to a concrete physical threat from poisoning. But in many of my other research encounters with acceptance, it has been described with an emphasis on how people's mental and emotional state can determine their survival. My conversation partners in Rwanda have often told me that they cannot "afford" an emotional reaction. In my research concerning life on Iwawa Island, not accepting the situation of living under a constant threat of death by bringing one's

[54] The quotes I make from conversations outside of interviews are from my fieldnotes, usually taken a few hours after a conversation.

emotions fully under control was described as making a person prone to disease and starvation (Løvgren 2018). Accepting your proximity to death, not delving into the wrongness of your arrest and your current mistreatment, in these narratives secures your survival by giving you the mental peace and energy to keep overcoming threats to your life. This approach to survival resembles the attitude described by Nancy Scheper-Hughes in her ethnography of motherhood and infant mortality in Brazil: "The experience of too much loss, too much death […] led to a kind of patient resignation (clinical psychologists would label it 'accommodation syndrome') that obliterated outrage as well as sorrow" (Scheper-Hughes 2008, 29).

Within the social norms that frame this form of acceptance, emotions have powerful and potentially dangerous effects on the subject. In her analysis of 'Truth Telling' as a reconciliation policy in Rwanda, Karen Brounéus argues that such an approach to emotions is a common part of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Brouneus 2010). She draws on this perspective to argue that many aspects of RPF's reconciliation initiatives have a re-traumatizing effect on the participants, as they have forced them to talk in public settings about intimate and highly emotional subjects (see also Nyirubugara 2013). Brounéous' argument, linking the perception of strong emotions as dangerous to PTSD, seems highly relevant to analyses of 'the psychic life of power' (Butler 1997), that is, how power and violence shape how we experience the world. Taking the harms of systemic violence from past conflicts and the current government seriously does not, I argue, entail an effacement of a person's "subjectivity and opinions" (Thomson 2011, 453), which is implied when compliance is characterized this way. It relocates subjectivity in a context where agency is also expressed through composure and self-control.

While RPF's truth telling policy has been described as retraumatizing as it made people talk in public about emotional and sensitive subjects, other parts of the current government's approach to reconciliation seem to take a similar point of departure in the disturbing effect of emotions to public life. While RPF was still in exile, the Rwandan artist Kamariza wrote the song *Humura Rwanda* "be calm/be well Rwanda" as a tribute to the party. The song emphasizes the country's need for peace and calm and encourages Rwandans not to delve into their negative emotions of grief and anger. It has remained popular and is often performed live, played in the radio and in public gatherings, especially in the genocide commemoration events held every year in April. The chorus goes "*Humura Rwanda Nziza, Humura, Ngaho ndaje*" – Be calm, good Rwanda. Be calm, I'm here, I'm coming (Uwiringiyimana 2014; Stearns 2011, 75). "I'm here, I'm coming" refers to RPF as the saviors coming to rescue Rwanda from a genocidal government. Being calm is framed as an emotional state owed by Rwandans to the RPF state for the sake of its progress (see also Thomson 2013; Purdeková 2015; Sundberg 2016). However, when RPF plays this song in the current political situation in Rwanda, it takes on an additional meaning. It can be heard as a comforting tune, one that is chosen as a song to play at home in addition to its many mandatory playings, which I have seen done by those who believe in what they see as the overall project of RPF, and who

feel that their lives were saved by its army. But the call to be calm, because RPF is here, and RPF is coming, may also be related to the sense of ubiquitous threat that comes across in Gilles' story. Being calm is here described as a response to a real or imagined provocation intended to make him and his friends explode and provide a pretext for arrest. I will elaborate on the role of patience in this form of testing below. First, I turn my attention to the agency expressed in what may be termed 'radical acceptance' – acceptance that not only entails obeying orders, but also feeling calm and accepting in doing so.

Narrative agency

To analyze the agency in radical acceptance, I engage Benhabib's concept of 'narrative agency'. Narrative agency, in Sarah Lucas' reading of Benhabib, consists of "the capacity to say 'I' over time and with relation to others" (Lucas 2017, 3). Narrative agency is expressed in the ability to narrate, but not through a commitment to the same specific story over time. As Benhabib puts it: "it is not what the story is about that matters but, rather, one's ability to keep telling a story about who one is" (Benhabib 1999, 347). When there is nothing more to do to influence a situation that threatens to take your life, the only remaining course of action is to control how you react to it emotionally. Acceptance, in this context, might be read as a narrative maneuver. That is, acceptance can be seen as a way to take control of how you narrate your situation to yourself. Benhabib's insistence that the content of the story is not central, opens up for contradictions in the narrative. Young men who went to Iwawa and explained to me that they were wrongfully arrested, but chose to accept their situation, may be seen as having conflicting narrative elements in their story; how can you think it was wrong and still accept it? Here, I follow Benhabib in arguing that even if the content of the story is full of contradictions and/or illustrates a commitment to the subject's subordination, the capacity to tell a story remains. The continued capacity for story telling also opens up for the possibility of changing that story when one's situation changes (Benhabib 1999; Lucas 2017).

Analyzing the policy of national unity in Rwanda, Susan Thomson writes: "Obedience to the dictates of the policy [...] is frequently tactical, rather than sincere" (Thomson 2011, 439). Similar characterizations include "surface-level consent" (Purdeková 2015, 127), and a view on practices of compliance in Rwanda as underwritten by "resentment toward the RPF state" (Chakravarty 2016a, 262). In the context, where radical acceptance is framed as a tactic for survival, it becomes harder to differentiate between tactical and sincere obedience; the tactic entails not harboring inner negative emotions about the obedience. This tactic is informed by the notion that underlying resentment is an expensive disposition which drains the energy you need to survive.

This brings me to my underlying problem with Scott's framework for understanding resistance, which is his subscription to the classic liberal idea of an

uncontaminated subject who is simply "laying it on thick" (Scott 1990, 170), in other words, being tactical about his obedience (see also Certeau 1997). In contrast to this approach to subjectivity stands poststructuralist characterizations of subjectification as a process that produces subjects (Foucault 1995, 1990). Briefly put, the argument that there was never an uncontaminated subject to begin with. Poststructuralist approaches to subjectivity, I argue, are useful for analyzing relations to power which reflect, in the words of Sherry Ortner, "a fragmented and shifting self" (1995, 187). A situation where it is unclear how to identify the person's true and unchanging beliefs. I will expand on this notion in the final section.

Patience in testing

Understanding the political meanings of patience and acceptance furthermore means paying attention to the cultural and political practices of testing in Rwanda. Testing is a widespread practice in Rwandan culture, and how a person responds to testing is commonly used to determine her or his dignity, respect and social status. Kinyarwanda with its many ambiguities and double meanings is used both socially and politically as a test of a person's intelligence, cunning and composure. Language tests are usually a part of the negotiation of dowry at wedding ceremonies, and they are a common form of entertainment in daily conversations between Rwandans (Adekunle 2007; Rusagara 2009; Des Forges 2011; Uwanziga 2015). Discussing the political meaning of testing, Bert Ingelaere analyzes the Kinyarwanda term *ubwenge*:

> the cultural conception of *ubwenge* is necessary to fully appreciate the nature of their [Rwandans'] interactions and communication (de Lame 2004; Rukebesha 1985; Overdulve 1997; Ntampaka 1999; Lestrade 1972; Crepeau 1985). This complex notion incorporates a range of elements, though in the broadest sense, it refers to a valorization of the kind of intelligence that results in public self-control (Ingelaere 2010a, 54).

Danielle de Lame and Ingelaere both use their analyses to argue that the appearance of consensus among "ordinary Rwandans" (Ingelaere 2010a, 50) cannot straightforwardly be taken as that. Arguing from the perspective of those subjected to state power, Ingelaere states that: "The Rwandan system of communication was (and is) esoteric: statements reveal and conceal at the same time" (ibid). While I agree with these analyses, I argue that they share an analytical tendency to pay less attention to the use of *ubwenge* by those who yield power. Analyses that use Scott's division between the elite's public transcripts and the subtle weapons of the weak have a tendency to focus on the cunning of those who are subject to power. There is a Nietzschean undercurrent to this framework: the powerful are free to say what they want openly, whereas the dominated have to conceal and wear fake masks (Nietzsche 2008; Scott 2007). This perspective ignores the deceitful actions taken

by people in power. In the Rwandan context, it fails to pay attention to how the authorities use or are imagined to use *ubwenge*. Analyzing these practices, I follow Andrea Grant's focus on the RPF state's "indirect, coded, disingenuous, and cryptic means to police its citizens" (2015b, 30). In Gilles' story, the authorities reveal and conceal the 'real' meaning of what is going on. As he described it, older relatives in conflict with younger men deliberately try to provoke them into reacting with aggression in order to use their aggression as an excuse to have them arrested. This form of vigilant patience, expressed through acceptance and compliance, is framed as a refusal to be arrested, punished and/or killed with impunity.

In 2013, an older man, Bosco, living in a rural area of Rwanda explained his understanding of Rwanda's politics in a way that shares Gilles' valorization of patience. Bosco was hutu, and he was telling me about one of his friends, also hutu, who had gone to prison for 'genocide ideology'. Genocide ideology is a crime invented by RPF, which refers to ideas that resemble those of the 1994 genocidal regime and thus might be breeding ground for a new genocide (Republic of Rwanda 2006; Waldorf 2011; Thomson 2011b). What had sent his friend to prison, Bosco claimed, was what he had said during that year's public genocide commemoration event, when the crowd had been forced by local officials to have a debate about the dangers of genocide. Upon encouragement to speak, the friend had said that there were existing hostilities in the 1994 Rwandan society between tutsi and hutu, and that the genocide was not only a result of the erstwhile government's actions, but also of these hostile sentiments. This statement was then taken as an expression of genocidal ideology and the friend was taken to prison. Bosco, however, explained to me that the statement, that was considered a crime in 2013, had been fed to them by local officials in the commemoration events held in 2012. That is, this explanation had changed from being mandatory to being a crime in that area. In Bosco's understanding, local officials had done this deliberately. The explanation's changing status was an expression of cunning from the side of the authorities as a strategy to increase the number of hutu arrested for genocide ideology. Viewed in this way, the authorities too use *ubwenge* to trick people into making themselves arrestable. The best thing for hutu to do, Bosco argued, was to try to be silent about these issues in public meetings and not be tempted by the local officials' sneaky encouragements to speak.

This framing of silence, I argue, is different from Scott's view of "silences" as "disguise" (Scott 1990, 138). Bosco was not describing his silence as a disguise of his true beliefs. His silence in this context was a response to his sense of the impossibility of knowing what the mandatory explanation was going to be this year. Even if he wanted to give an acceptable answer to questions asked during commemoration, he felt that he could not possibly succeed in answering questions about the genocide correctly. This is not to say that silence is never disguise, but to call attention to other forms of political subjectivity expressed through silence.

RPF has often been accused of only accepting its one truth about the genocide in 1994 and punishing every expression of dissent from this story (Davenport and

Stam 2009; Ingelaere 2010a; Waldorf 2011; Reyntjens 2015b; Jessee 2017; Benda 2018). But while there are many stories about the genocide which are indisputably forbidden to mention in Rwanda,[55] what is allowed is less clear. Public written and verbal statements about the genocide given by members of RPF often carry contradictions and incoherencies.[56] With respect to the issue in dispute in Bosco's story, RPF has in many outlets argued that the genocide was orchestrated by the former government, and that Rwandans as a people naturally love each other – they just needed the right government (Ingelaere 2010a; Mulindahabi 2015; Sundberg 2016). But RPF has also undertaken a range of political initiatives that take as a precondition that hutu need to be re-educated because they have genocidal sentiments, and these initiatives include hutu born after 1994 (Mgbako 2005; Thomson 2011a; Blackie and Hitchcott 2018), a perspective which seems to be in line with what allegedly sent Bosco's friend to prison. Lars Waldorf has remarked on this tension that RPF's campaign against genocide ideology illustrate the conflict between its reconciliation policies (which negate ethnicity), and its battle against genocide negationism (which emphasizes ethnicity) (Waldorf 2011; see also Stys 2012; Purdeková 2015). The impossibility of reaching a state secured against accusations of genocide ideology, which is related to the crime of "ethnic divisionism" (Thomson 2013, 13) is highlighted in a report by the organization, Human Rights Watch:

> Rwandan judges interviewed by HRW themselves cannot define what divisionism is, despite the fact that each has adjudicated and convicted on these charges following the "I know it when I see it approach" (HRW 2007, 34).

Where Bosco read the change in acceptable explanations of local officials as their deliberate use of *ubwenge*, my thoughts go to the insecurity about and constantly changing demands of their jobs. It is not unthinkable to me that local authorities in areas with many hutu should, as Bosco suggested, have a requirement to arrest a certain number of hutus for whatever offence they can come up with. The same topic came up in my research concerning Iwawa, where there seemed to be geographical differences with respect to what caused young men to be arrested, although I have no way to verify this. But local authorities may also be overzealous in arresting people as a response to their own sense of ubiquitous threat. Being a public servant in Rwanda is a very volatile position, and from village level to government ministers, 'the authorities' regularly lose their jobs, are imprisoned or

[55] Although RPF accounts of the genocide vary, the high number of hutu killed by RPF troops is always denied.

[56] E.g. Rwanda was harmonious with no ethnic division prior to colonialism (cf. Thomson 2013; Mulindahabi 2015), and the slightly altered claim that there were ethnic differences between tutsis and hutus prior to colonialism, but they were constituted in different nutrition (cf. Musahara & Huggins 2005). Members of RPF working in a ministry had a discussion about the ancient pre-colonial ethnic hostilities in Rwanda with me present in their office, knowing that I was there in a research capacity.

killed. At times public servants may lose their jobs because they fail to deliver various development or security objectives, but other firings or arrests have vague and unclear public justifications (New Times 2011, 2012; Times Reporter 2016; Kwibuka 2016; Ingelaere 2014), especially when it comes to prominent members of the cabinet (Verhoeven 2012; Himbara 2018; Newz.ug 2018).

The always wrong body

In analyzing a political situation with unclear and constantly changing rules, a parallel may be drawn to the production of bodies taking place in military camps. In my research concerning military training in civic education, young men have given examples of military commanders punishing trainees for being too short, for being too tall, for not being strong, and for being strong. In the initial phases of military training, one young man was said to have been beaten with a stick by a commander asking him why he was so short. Upon seeing a very tall man, the same commander was said to have told this man to stoop. The commander reportedly held his hand by the top of his own head telling the tall man that he did not want to see one centimeter stick above his height. As a group, the trainees were punished for being too weak and were made to do drills to get stronger. One trainee was stronger than the rest, which also seemed to provoke the commander. A young man quoted the commander laughingly for saying: "so you like doing push-ups? You can do push-ups for the rest of the day!". This aspect of military training is not unique to Rwanda (Eisenhart 1975; Samimian-Darash 2013). Military training commonly consists of routinized and highly structured activities (Foucault 1995; Purdeková 2015; Sundberg 2016), but there is also an element of unpredictability in the military experience during the establishment of military authority. Wayne Eisenhart describes how efforts to secure obedience in the military camp entails that a recruit who performed "to the best of his ability and kept his mouth shut [was still] beaten and terrorized", and told by the commander: "You can't hack it" (1975, 15).

In Grant analyzes a different example of young men who are incapable of having the correct body. She examines two different arrests of young men from Kigali. One explains his arrest as related to being "too hutu" (Grant 2015b, 27), meaning that he was suspected to have ties to opposition forces out of loyalty to the old regime. The other explains it as related to being "too tutsi" (Grant 2015b, 28), meaning that his physical features made him look too much like an RPF soldier, which caused him to be accused of desertion. The way RPF's ethnic discrimination works is not along a uniform line solely directed at hutu. Rather, the tenseness around ethnicity causes a multiplication of violence, where all ethnic groups are discriminated against in different ways (see also Burnet 2012; Thomson 2013).

People who can't hack it, can't crack the code, don't have any way of knowing what the authorities want from them or any opportunity of giving it to them face "infinitely ramifying possible futures" (Carey 2017, 6). That is, Niklas Luhmann's

characterization of the dizzying complexity of reality, where actors are overwhelmed by the sheer possibilities of a given situation when they cannot trust each other is relevant for this type of situation. Luhmann proposes that trust is what makes the world bearable and what allows people to take actions in the world (1979). In the situations I have analyzed, I propose that patience, acceptance and a general attitude of openness to the drastic changes any situation can take is another way to navigate this form of complex reality. Another method for dealing with the complexities of reality in a situation of ubiquitous threat is reflected in the part of Gilles' story that concern the recruitment of state violence into intimate relations.

State violence as a real or imagined resource

State violence in Rwanda often operates discretely and indirectly (although it clearly also operates directly) by way of implied threats and dispersed webs of hidden and known representatives of the government (de Lame 2004; Baker 2007; Purdeková 2011a; Burnet 2012; Ingelaere 2014; Grant 2015). The resulting situation is an ongoing sense of insecurity about when and from where a person's life is in danger, summarized succinctly by a respondent of Carina Tertsakian, whom she quotes for arguing that "[a]ll Rwandans are are afraid of being arrested one day" (Tertsakian 2011, 210). In a similar vein, a middle-aged man with hutu ethnicity, living in a rural area in Rwanda, was, in a conversation with me, talking about his fear of arrest and death from representatives of the local military chapter. He did not talk about a specific crime he committed, but about his view that they could always find motivation for an arrest. "It is very easy to lose your life in Rwanda", he told me. When he saw that I furrowed my brows with worry, he gave me a big smile and said, "but don't be afraid!". He had been talking for some time about his view of the many reasons to be afraid, and thus he was not arguing that there was no basis for fear. Rather, I interpreted his instruction as motivated by a concern that he had told me more than I, as a delicate European, could handle. Moreover, we were preparing to walk out into the public sphere, and I understood his instruction as an encouragement for me to bring my emotions under control before that, so we would not attract undesired attention.

Violence between family members and other members of the community often operate in similarly discrete ways (M. Shyaka 2007; Verpoorten 2010; Nyirubugara 2013; Sundberg 2016). The poisoning that Gilles suspected is an example of a level of threat that is hard to assess. I have often heard Rwandans describe suspected poisonings as possible heart failings or mention other explanations for why a person died or fell ill (see also Buckley-Zistel 2006; Chakravarty 2016a). But the uncertainty still structures the experience of death. It is hard to know who or what will bring death with respect to both state- and interpersonal violence in Rwanda. Because of this uncertainty, many Rwandans invite representatives of the state to take part in their intimate lives (Bognitz 2018). Gilles described his fear that Damian's uncle might poison him, but reversely older people have described

fearing young men for their perceived lack of morals and aggressive inclinations (Sommers 2010). In this context of mutual suspicion, it is not uncommon for people to request the police to arrest a member of their families. In my research concerning Iwawa, these arrests were at times motivated by the family's exhaustion by a young man's drug abuse and related theft of the family's possessions. Having no other resources available they chose to have the man arrested, even though not all of them trusted the efficacy of the police's methods. In other situations, young men described a prior conflict with older family members over inheritance of property, which they argued had then bribed the police in order to have them arrested.

This means that, although in the phrasing of one of Andrea Purdeková's respondents "everyone is watching their fellow" (Purdeková 2015, 96) in Rwanda, it is still easy to get the sense that something is lurking which you cannot quite see. I therefore propose to draw a parallel between the role of the RPF state in intimate relations and the role sorcerers play in many societies. Indeed, like sorcerers, the state in Rwanda is attributed great seeing powers (ibid; Sundberg 2016). This is reflected, for example, in the rumor presented to me by several men of hutu ethnicity, who claimed that although the current government had eliminated ethnicity on the mandatory identity cards, local authorities had placed a secret ethnicity marker on the new cards that only they could decipher. Involving yourself with sorcery is a way to enlist help in looking into the shadows to identify a threat against you. At the same time, being involved in sorcery makes you vulnerable to the dark forces of witchcraft (West 2007; Geschiere 2013). Sorcery, we may say, is a resource as well as an activity that exposes you and draws you into dangerous territory. Similarly, RPF surveillance and state violence are resources and simultaneous threats, and like sorcery is around the world, they are often actively requested by people in Rwanda. State violence then, has concrete practical purposes – helping to prevent a son from stealing property – and more magical properties – helping to see something murky, to identify a possible threat through arrest and interrogation. In rural areas, where women farmers have a multitude of reasons to distrust and dislike the local authorities; they pull their crops from the earth, they ethnically discriminate them, they tear down their houses (Ingelaere 2010b; Thomson 2013; Ansoms 2013; Chakravarty 2016b), women still regularly include the police in their intimate domestic affairs (Kagaba 2016). In 2015, Rwanda's Chief of Police, Emmanuel Gasana, stated that the two main tasks of his police officers were to engage in domestic disputes and investigate small-scale robberies (Interpol General Secretariat 2015).

My motivation for engaging critically with the analytical tendency to search for ways in which Rwandans and others reject or subvert political control is that it may work to gloss over the workings of violence in society and in the subject. Violence does not only come from a government that "bears down on a population" (Rollason 2017, 59). Living in insecurity and a sense of ubiquitous threat affects how people relate to each other (de Lame 2004; Buckley-Zistel 2006; Purdeková 2015;

Sundberg 2016; Chakravarty 2016a). In assessing real or imagined threats to their lives, state violence becomes a real or imagined resource, also for people who have many reasons to mistrust representatives of the state. As argued by Bruce Lawrence and Aisha Karim "violence is always and everywhere a process. As process, violence is cumulative and boundless. It always spills over. It creates and recreates new norms of collective self-understanding" (2007, 12).

Shifting subjectivities

This brings me to the final reflections, wherein I assemble the different threads of this paper using Nandy's analysis of the self and state violence in colonial India. Nandy argues that in situations of severe violence and oppression, survival may require "a certain permeability of boundaries" (Nandy 1983, 107). Responding to the charge that such practices of giving in to power represents an 'effeminate' attitude of compromise, he argues that "these 'personality failures' of the Indian could be another form of developed vigilance, or sharpened instinct or faster reaction to man-made suffering" (1983,110).

Nandy's own characterization of this form of subjectivity follows Scott's approach to subordination; he argues that these tactics allow the Indian to never be truly penetrated by power. For the purposes of this paper's argument, I instead return to Benhabib's narrative agency. Rather than finding coherence in the uncontaminated subject who maintains her true beliefs secretly, I propose to use Benhabib's insight about narration; coherence is produced by the subjects' capacity to keep narrating. The drastically changing demands from authorities, as well as the general situation of "radical, and routinized uncertainty" (Cooper and Pratten 2015, 1) about what may constitute a threat in the everyday lives of Rwandans, produce shifting expressions of subjectivity. Following Nandy, I venture that a certain openness in terms of how subjects define their personal boundaries may at times be necessary to survive these conditions. And the examples I have analyzed in this paper illustrate, if anything, a high valorization of survival.

In our capacity as social analysts, we are not obliged to consider negatively those who focus on surviving the effects of violence. Earlier drafts of this paper have been met with the question: "But what would you then say isn't an expression of agency?". I don't think social analysis has to give examples of this. Why would this be an important academic task? Rather than working with hierarchical rankings of subject performance, where certain modes of being are considered "pathetic" and "reified purely as object" (Alcoff and Gray 1993, 277, 278), because of a perceived "deplorable passivity" (Mahmood 2011, 15), we can do the hermeneutic work of exploring political subjectivities, also the ones who do not carry out overt or covert resistance. This paper has sought to illustrate a variety of ways in which agency is expressed in practices of compliance, and in efforts that center on survival. It calls for more analytical attention to such practices. Inspired by Soran Reader, I argue that the analytical preference for agency in resistance communicates the message

that: "when I am passive, incapable, constrained, dependent, I am less a person, I count less" (Reader 2007, 580). Being thoroughly affected by violence, I argue, does not make a person count less, and our analyses can do more to reflect this.

Conclusion

Under the title 'Politics of Patience' this paper has discussed the political meanings and effects of practices of compliance in Rwanda. Politics of patience refer to the precarious political, social and economic situation in Rwanda that take part in producing patient political subjectivities and in turn to the politics effected by those subjectivities. This paper has focused on the lived experiences of ubiquitous threat in Rwanda and argued that practices of acceptance and compliance reflect agency and political subjectivity expressed through self-control. Self-control expressed, for example, in the control young men on Iwawa take over the way they narrate their situation to themselves by accepting their condition in order to survive. Self-control is also expressed in the form of mistrusting patience that responds to real and imagined tests from 'the authorities'; be they relatives, police offers or other government authorities, whose actions have been framed as deliberate attempts to provoke aggression and arrest. By being patient in the face of the powerfuls' sneaky attempts to produce arrestable bodies, my respondents describe compliance as the refusal to be conned in this manner. Young men subjected to violence for being too short, too tall, too weak, too strong, too hutu, or too tutsi, are describing a situation where 'you can't hack it'. These bodies, that are always wrong and always subject to punishment illustrate the difficulty of knowing what the state wants from them or how to provide it. They illustrate a sense of ubiquitous threat, the center of which is hard to locate (Taussig 1992). With a focus on the inscrutability of threat, the paper has moreover characterized the ways in which people in Rwanda invite representatives of the state to take part in some of their intimate relations. That is, because the state is attributed near-magical seeing powers, the state is often used as a real or imagined resource to identify real or imagined threats from family members or neighbors.

Overall, the paper has argued for an analytical move towards engaging with more aspects of political subjectivity. Analyses of the work of violence need to be able to include narratives that do not center on dignity or alternative signs of strength. It constitutes both moral and analytical wrongdoing not to. Moral wrongdoing, because by centering on the clever ways in which the subordinated push back, we exclude certain modes of being and certain lives from our analyses, as if these don't count as much as others. Analytical wrongdoing, because it often works within a binary approach to agency where it is only ascribed to those who carry out resistant acts, and thus does not capture the many ways in which agency is enacted in compliance. Capturing the agency of the compliant acts of this paper, I have read Benhabib and Nandy together to characterize shifting and fragmented selves, whose agencies are not latched to an uncontaminated core, free from domination. Rather

their agency is enacted in their narration, an ability they retain through a high degree of adaptability to accommodate the changing and unclear requirements from authorities.

8. Conclusion

Many studies have been devoted to characterizing the form of state making practiced in post-genocide Rwanda, and many studies have similarly characterized how the people subjected to this state making react, respond to and maneuver within this system (e.g. Straus and Waldorf 2011b; Huggins 2013; Ingelaere 2014; Kamatali 2014; Purdeková 2015; Sundberg 2016). This thesis is one such study. What sets it apart from other studies of sovereignty and subjectivity in Rwanda is its increased emphasis on randomness on the side of sovereignty and on the agency of compliance on the side of subjectivity. It is by stressing these two aspects of how state violence works in Rwanda that I have characterized politics of patience. By analyzing the fragmented sets of empirical material I encountered in my first fieldwork about the Iwawa rehabilitation program, and my failed attempt at a second fieldwork, I have characterized some of the political practices that produce patience and reversely some of the political practices produced by patience.

Retracing main arguments

The approach to sovereignty of this thesis has oscillated between what may be termed a Foucauldian and an Arendtian approach to politics and violence. Whereas the Foucauldian perspective does not identify a center of power, wherein strategies of violence are thought up and afterwards disseminated, it does claim that there are ways to trace an underlying logic to violence by examining the way it works within different spaces, institutions and actors. I have drawn on this perspective in article 1, wherein Turner and I attribute meaning and purpose to the violence and other activities on Iwawa Island based on the meanings attributed to them by authorities and graduates from the island. From this perspective, violence is not mainly random. Its purpose is centrally to transform both the young men through an intimate engagement with them, and the larger society which is transformed as the subjects termed problematic are transformed on the island. The violence can be read as part of a plan that comes to life in the course of the modern exercise of sovereignty. From a Foucauldian take on power, I have moreover, in article 4, characterized the RPF state as promoting through various activities the notion that the Rwandan population owes the state to be calm and not to delve into their negative emotions of sorrow or anger. In this reading, politics of patience are

actively encouraged by the RPF. Patience, amenability and openness to change are goals deliberately pursued by the multiple institutions and actors involved in RPF state making.

In contrast, Arendt's approach to violence frames it as an end in itself. It is arbitrary, destructive and its exercise does not produce meaning. This perspective partly underwrites my analysis of sexually harassing state representatives in article 3 and definitely motivates my analysis of the arbitrariness of violence in the military camp in article 4. In this reading of violence, I depart from the Foucauldian approach of reading all the threads that align together and instead emphasize all the ways state projects are manipulated, re-appropriated and become destructive in ways that hardly serve any easily defined purpose. This take on violence draws on Bataille's approach to sovereignty as a power that does not need to refer to utility. Sovereignty, in this view, does not need to provide justifications, i.e. *for the sake of security* (e.g. Benjamin 1986; Agamben 1998; Foucault 2003); it transgresses for the sake of transgression. From this perspective, politics of patience arise as a consequence of state actors' multiple manipulations of political projects, which then come to continuously contradict themselves, causing both the rulers and the ruled to be unsure of what the rules are this day or on that topic.

The aim of the thesis' characterization of sovereign violence is to have the Foucauldian cake and eat it with Arendt too. That is, with Foucault I contend that we can read order from all the messes and contradictions in the exercise of Rwandan sovereignty. Many Rwandans certainly do. For example, Bosco, who attributes the contradiction in enforcement of genocide commemoration rules to the secret plans of what might be termed the 'shadow state' (Verhoeven 2012; Purdeková, Reyntjens, and Wilén 2018); the secret forces working behind the well-polished scenes in Rwanda. In this way, Bosco and others like him produce the state's structural effects. They make order out of the state's seemingly random acts of violence. And with the attribution of near-magical seeing powers to the state, the state also becomes a real and imagined resource in identifying the threats that lurk in the shadows. That is, people who have a multitude of reasons to mistrust state representatives still invite police men, local arbitrators and other authorities to take part in their intimate lives. The state is used for its practical capacity to, for example, arrest a family member for a time, and for its more magical properties of finding out who, within a situation of uncertainty, might be trying to hurt you.

For all the order that is then produced by the state, Arendt's take on violence is a useful moderator to the *apophenia*, "the human tendency to see system, pattern, and intentions where there is only 'noise'" (Carey 2017, 6), of both researchers and researched in Rwanda. While I depart from Arendt's underlying ontology of power and violence, her insights about totalitarianism and its lack of coherency are astonishingly appropriate to many aspects of how sovereignty is exercised in Rwanda. By drawing on Arendt, this thesis hopes to take Foucault-inspired criticism of state violence a bit further.

Existing research on RPF's use of military training as civic education has tended

to take the Foucauldian approach. The critique of violence has then taken the form of problematizing the desired and resulting subject transformation, and showing how the elevated status of 'the good citizen' (S. Turner 2014), 'the perfect development subject' (Purdeková 2015) and 'the model citizen' (Sundberg 2016) discriminates and disenfranchises the vast majority of the population. In taking the critique further, I argue that not only does the resulting hierarchy between right and wrong bodies discriminate and disenfranchise. In a multitude of situations, bodies are always wrong and always subject to punishment. While we can identify a particular kind of tutsi soldier identity as being idealized and promoted in the state's civic education efforts (Sundberg 2016), it is possible to be "too tutsi"[57] (Grant 2015b, 28), and, I would argue, not possible to gain a secured subject status.

The difference between being subjected to violence that serves a purpose and violence that does not may be found in the difference in how the threat of death is experienced and expressed. In chapter 2, I recounted 'Olive's' story as it is presented by Chakravarty (2016). When Olive says, "they will kill me", it is a different experience of threat than what was expressed in the vaguer quotes from my respondents, such as: "I felt I could die", "you are living with death" and "it is very easy to lose your life". Olive's fear that 'they' will kill her relates to a clearly identified threat. She has a sense of who 'they' are. The local authorities who already arrested her before. She describes why they would kill her for talking about the things she has been through. It violates the public transcript about the genocide and *gacaca*. We may say that she identifies a set of rules, and that she knows she is transgressing them.

The fear expressed in the quotes from my respondents relates to a less clearly defined threat. They are not sure what exactly would take their lives. It is expressed in the abstract e.g. 'the course', or an unspecific 'they can always find a motivation for arrest'. Although they have an acute sense of death being a very real possibility, it is harder for them to say where it would come from. They are not deliberately transgressing a clearly defined set of rules. They are, in my interpretation, unsure of what the rules are exactly and they show uncertainty about what it would take for them to make it out alive from their situation, even if they comply to the best of their ability.

Olive's fear of death, moreover, relates to a relatively stable aspect of her identity. She is a hutu woman, who, as the story is relayed by Chakravarty, has been wrongly accused of participating in the genocide. Olive's relation to sovereignty invites a Scottian reading of her political subjectivity. The state is directing a clearly defined form of violence against her, and she is reacting with silence underwritten with resentment in order to protect her individual sense of dignity. She knows in her heart she did nothing wrong, and while she cannot fight back, she can at least

[57] In addition to Grant's example, the now deceased King Kigeri Ndahindurwa might be read as a man who was too tutsi to be allowed to return to the country by the RPF regime. Having lived in exile since 1959, he was not allowed to return by RPF, which did not want to revive the question of whether the Nyiginya monarchy still held a place in contemporary Rwandan society (Roberts 2016).

remain with her own sense of what is right in the hidden transcript. Bosco, in contrast, is relating to the randomness of sovereign violence. It is harder for him to decipher in what ways the state will come for him next, because the state is not attacking his individual identity in the way it is Olive's. Rather, he, like many of my respondents from Iwawa, has a sense that there are forces trying to trap him up in ways, he cannot quite foresee. His is a tense patient silence, wherein he remains open and attentive to the new directions in which the authorities may take the violence next.

In 2014, I attended a genocide commemoration event where three eye witnesses from the area Bisesero gave their accounts of how French soldiers had helped the *genocidaires* in 1994. According to them, French helicopters had deliberately hovered near forests where tutsi where hiding, using the hope that they would be saved by the French to lure them out. As soon as these people had come out of hiding, the helicopter took off again, leaving them to be killed by the *genocidaires*.[58] This story can also be read as a metaphor for the form of mistrusting patience, this thesis has characterized. Those in power, the authorities, are trying to lure you out with a range of tricks and unknown techniques, their use of *ubwenge*, and it is the coming out of hiding in itself that is dangerous. In contrast to the defiant muteness of Scott's peasants, this muteness is mistrusting, based on a sense that it is dangerous to react to provocation at all, leaving aside the content of your reaction. That is, leaving aside whether you contradict or confirm what was just treated as the public transcript. It is, I argue, a similar rationale to what is reflected in Gilles' characterization of patience as a response to the older relatives trying to bait young men into outbursts of aggression, creating a pretext for arrest. And I venture that it partook in producing the emotional ambivalence occurring in the interviews I analyzed in article 2. When I, as a researcher, lured out my interviewees from hiding and made Josephine beg me to consider her 'coming out' enough.

A different form of patient openness is reflected in Musa's characterization of acceptance as a way to survive Iwawa. By accepting and being open to his situation, rather than letting himself feel his anger and sorrow about the injustice that had placed him in rehabilitation, he retained the strength he needed to keep overcoming the recurring and unforeseeable threats to his life. In contrast to Bosco's and Gilles' mistrusting patience, Musa described negative emotions in general as an obstacle to survival. This form of radical acceptance, I have argued, cannot quite be captured by notions of tactical obedience or surface level consent. The tactic involves not harboring destructive negative emotions under the surface.

With these analyses, I have therefore proposed to use a poststructuralist reading of Nandy's fragmented and shifting selves together with Benhabib's narrative agency to characterize subjectivities that are not always hiding their core beliefs, but rather retain an open and changing approach to sovereign violence. That is, their agency resides in their ability to keep narrating their situation, even if the

[58] These accounts are also presented in the book *Bisesero* by Serge Farnel (2014).

content of the narrative is contradictive or illustrates a commitment to subordination. With respect to the derogatory saying in Kinyarwanda that Rwandans have always followed *irivuze umwami*, whatever the king said (cf. Mulindahabi 2015, 172), I propose to read it into the context of randomly exercised sovereignty. As my analyses have focused on the power of sovereignty, as enacted by a variety of different authorities, to make the rules up as they go, the saying can be read as highlighting the importance of what the king said most recently, rather than a characterization of mindless obedience. Indeed, the overall ambition of the thesis' analyses of political subjectivity is to encourage a different conceptual approach to compliance and obedience. As phenomena not to be mentioned briefly on our way to analyze the interesting subtle resisters, but as worthy of thorough attention in their own right.

In summation, politics of patience, the forms of sovereign violence that produce patient political subjectivities, consist of practices from which we can read a coherent strategy of producing subjects marked by openness and amenability to transformation (Purdeková 2015, 231). And, importantly, they consist of a mess of incoherent practices, wherein violence spills over and becomes destructive in ways unrelated state making. As I have highlighted in article 3, it is often very hard to tell these two forms of violence apart. In the sexually harassing field relationship I had with a state representative, sex seemed to play a major role in my getting and subsequently being denied research access. It was hard to tell whether the state was trying to fuck me, or Fred was, and whether the state was denying me access, or Fred was. That is, it was hard to decipher where the state's violence ended and Fred's violence began. This form of uncertainty, I have argued, does not only relate to my status as relatively inexperienced researcher. It is produced on a society-wide scale by all the times it is unclear what the state is trying to do, when state representatives contradict themselves, and actions that were mandatory one day are punished the next. As argued by Carey, uncertainty is also produced in places marked by a general attitude of mistrust. Mistrusting people are uncertain about the status of what others tell them, and they moreover deliberately generate uncertainty with their statements and actions to "muddy the waters, and thicken the epistemological fog" (2017, 27). To return to my metaphor of hiding, it is easier to hide in muddy waters and fog. This function of mistrust in Rwanda is represented in, for example, Fujii's engagements with rumors and lies in interviews about the genocide (2010). Carey argues that this practice of creating uncertainty relates to a sense that knowledge about the inner life of others is a violation. To the moral claim that it is akin to theft to perform the prying practices of drawing others out of hiding.

Based on the contention that my uncertainty became a productive method and that my ethical failures during interviews taught me something important about political subjectivity, the thesis has made a methodological case for emphasizing failure. Failure in terms of getting at the empirical material and failure to reconcile contradictions analytically. With respect to the first form of failure, there is an

ethical value to restraining ourselves from trying to get to all the things people in Rwanda are trying to hide. This is not a novel argument, but in article 2, I have added to this form of caution that the, often taken for granted, attitude of researcher empathy may create a too intimate engagement with research subjects. Interpreting my encounters with emotional ambivalence in the research interview, I follow Carey's moral caution against understanding and involving yourself too much in the inner lives of others. In a context where control means life or death, it easily brings about a sense of too much loss of control for the research participants. With respect to failure to reconcile contradictions analytically, I propose that studies of the state in Rwanda could do well to undertake this form of failure more often. Instead of stretching ourselves far to make sense of contradictions in RPF governance, we may do well to sometimes present the contradiction and the resulting uncertainty as a less easy to digest research product. By leaving the contradiction unexplained, we communicate what I have argued is an important aspect of how sovereignty works in Rwanda.

Thus, there is a link between the thesis' theoretical project criticizing conceptions of 'the weak' (Scott 2000; Thomson 2013) as secretly, cleverly and subtly strong and its methodological project of emphasizing failure. The link is the desire to produce in the reader an embodied sense of violence that is harder to swallow. It is this form of research, I have called research that hurts. In chapter 2, I followed Abu-Lughod in proposing that we search for and romanticize resistance because it can be taken as a sign of the 'resilience of the human spirit' (Abu-Lughod 1990). In these searches, I worry, we shy away from analyzing loss of dignity and emphasize actions of resistance as the former is harder to stomach. We want our research subjects to be strong for us, to give us hope that they have the potential to overcome all the injustices that befall them. Research that hurts may rupture some of the academic practices, which I argue are a bit too comforting. That is, by dwelling on the uncomfortable, on field relations that are painful, ethically failed and in other ways hurt the researcher and the researched, the reader may be productively hurt too. Hurt in the sense of troubling some of the analyses that make for a too easy consumption of the other. Following Visweswaran, my emphasis on failure is therefore not intended as a move from "Fieldwork that failed" to "Learning from mistakes" (cf. Visweswaran 1994, 97). As Visweswaran characterizes this approach, problems that were initially described as failures are eventually recuperated as successes through the practical guidelines drawn out from lessons learned. While my field experiences were in many ways productive, this does not make them successes or lessons learned. Neither the relations analyzed in article 2 or 3 represent successful field relations, nor do I draw out practical solutions on how to avoid them. By emphasizing the hurt and the lack of successful finality in failure, I aim to produce a continuing and open-ended engagement with some of the difficult questions raised by my failures. Questions highlighting the tension between producing knowledge about violence that goes some way to represent people, who have no recourse to represent themselves and the ethical failures of this form of

representation. And questions about how to protect ourselves as researchers when we do research in violent contexts with people who transgress against us and make us hurt. I believe that this form of research is worthwhile, as do the many critical voices I have quoted in this thesis, such as Spivak, Visweswaran, Lather and MacLure. With my account of research that hurts I have aimed at characterizing critical research awareness as "an active ongoing process – incomplete and certainly not one to be memorialized as past historical moment" (Visweswaran 1994, 113). When I propose to productively hurt the reader, what I aim at is to produce an ongoing sense of unease, recalling Lather's argument in favor of 'becoming' (Lather 2000a).

Continuing the exploration

Based on the explorations of this thesis, I want to conclude by proposing different ways to take these arguments further. The first concerns the empirical subject matter about female sexualities and political manipulation in Rwanda. In this thesis, I have sketched out a reading of the historical and contemporary approaches to female sexualities and intelligence work, I have engaged my own experiences of sexual harassment and noted Nzahabwanayo's and T. P. William et al.'s reports of widespread sexual abuse in education. But this is an area that surely deserves more systematic and detailed attention. Existing research on gender in politics in Rwanda has tended to problematize the effectiveness RPF's gender policies (Longman 2006; Burnet 2008; Debusscher and Ansoms 2013; Mageza-Barthel 2016; Bayisenge 2015; Kagaba 2016; Abbott and Malunda 2016), but I have struggled to find texts that analyze the RPF state's many sexual abuses of women. In December 2017 and January 2018, a number of women on twitter used the hashtag #metoo to accuse prominent men in Kigali of drug rape (@my250tweets 2018). Several of them moreover recounted a process of trying to report the crime to the police, which had then buried the case and when the online controversy motivated another investigation, nothing came of it. *New Times* covered the story at the time, but has since then taken down all mentions of it (Ruhumuriza 2018). There is, I venture, a different aesthetic to the sexual violence committed by state representatives in Rwanda, than what is described by Mbembe, who emphasizes the obscene and the vulgar in these state extractions. Mbembe's bureaucrats and their public openly share a delight in excess and display of sexual abuses (1992). My male respondents have often contrasted what they learned about Rwandan gender equality in civic education with their view of West African, or at times Ugandan, masculinity as representative of this form of loud oppression.[59] Within Rwanda's tradition of performed asceticism and emphasis on subtle communications, sexual abuse presents itself differently, but this should not cause the question to be overlooked.

[59] Bert Ingelaere and Nina Wilén describe similar practices of Kinyarwanda speaking soldiers in DRC distancing their masculinity from that of 'barbaric others' (Ingelaere and Wilén 2017).

I propose that almost any research project set to take place in Rwanda could probe into the question of how the given political development makes way for sexual abuse, and that the question could inform an independent research project as well. I moreover suspect that if historians wanted to handle the question of women in Rwanda attributed sexualized trickster identities from colonial occupation to the present day through systematic archival research, they would find more than enough material for a monograph. This historical question matters politically today, both as a critical postcolonial engagement with sexuality and as a history of Rwanda's present.

The second way, I propose to continue the explorations of this thesis, is by approaching violence in Rwanda with different analytical tools. As many of my arguments have problematized some of the popular framings of state violence in Rwanda, another way to continue this thesis' explorations would be to analyze current political developments with a different take. For example, RPF began the *imidugudu* villagization policy in the late 1990s, wherein the population is intended to move into small and intensely administered units and farming activities are placed away from houses on larger acres of land. These larger plots have tended to be taken over by wealthier people following the logic that they have the means to produce more efficiently. As argued by C. Newbury, this policy clashes with the traditional practices of farmers in Rwanda, who have a saying that what makes banana groves thrive is "the smoke from houses" (2011, 234). Having a garden by the house is by Newbury characterized as a cultural claim to dignity, which opposes the technocratic ambitions of increasing agricultural output. In recent years, however, RPF has started promoting the essential importance of Rwandans having a "kitchen garden" (Mwijuke 2014; Rwanda Agriculture Board 2015; Rwanda Water Portal 2018; Global Communities 2018) in their own compounds and is planning an extensive rollout of this policy that is set to reach the whole population.

We *can* read this as an example of 'seeing like a neoliberal, technocratic state' (Scott 1998). First the state disenfranchises the majority of the rural population by taking away their land, and then it places the responsibility of their malnutrition on themselves, claiming that they just need to take better measures as individuals. But what if we see it through the lens of reshuffling the population? Of the kind of motion mania described by Arendt, the end goal of which is itself – more movement – rather than neoliberal utopia? First the state tells you that you need to give up your backwards thinking of wanting to grow produce by your house, and the next year it comes and blames you for not doing it, as this neglect is causing your children to starve. This is an example of a political development where a research project could look into the institutional memory of the Ministry of Agriculture and the other involved authorities. How many of the people, who were involved in preventing people from growing produce by their house during the *imidugudu* resettlement program, are now involved in 'teaching' these people to set up kitchen gardens? How much effort is put into reconciling these contradictory messages, and to what extent do the involved authorities ignore them or pretend

the prior instructions never existed? With Rwanda's ongoing replacements in administrative and political authorities, is it possible that the institutions themselves to some extent forgot that they took away people's gardens a few years ago? I venture that there are important insights to be gained by taking incoherency seriously in our analyses of state violence in Rwanda. As argued by Uvin, the heavy involvement of international development institutions in the work of the Rwandan state moreover helps to inscribe the rationale of movement for the sake of movement into this work (1998, 2003). A research project could also look into the institutional memory of the involved development institutions, who both helped fund and provided economic and ideological justification for *imidugudu* (Pottier 2002) and who are now involved in funding 'kitchen gardens'.

From an Arendtian focus on motion mania, we could also read some the practices we have labeled "containment" (Purdeková 2013, 2) as 'stirring'. Making sure that no one stays anywhere long enough to get comfortable. This logic was often the one used when my respondents speculated on the reasons for the arrests of some of RPF's grand old big men, like David Kabuye and Frank Rusagara. They were getting too popular, they were forming too many alliances, and they were starting to look like real alternatives to President Paul Kagame (see also Verhoeven 2012). A comparable practice, centering on movement, was described by the sex workers I interviewed in 2013-2014. Often they were not taken to detention centers but instead received a beating by the military or police officers (many of whom were their customers) and driven out to and left in a rural area away from the city, from which they would then have to walk back. Both women and men found on the street at the wrong time and place are routinely arrested and placed in a variety of centers for longer or shorter periods of time. From the perspective of stirring, the state might not be all that concerned with whether it transforms the many young men it arrests and places in transit centers or on Iwawa Island. Maybe it is not too troubling to the involved authorities that most of them end up back in the streets in a similar situation to what got them arrested. It might be enough that the practices of arrest disrupt young men from feeling free to assemble or to exist on the streets in general. An old-fashioned way of saying good night in Kinyarwanda is "*urare aharyana*". It means 'may you sleep somewhere that itches you'. The notion is that if you sleep too soundly, on too soft a place, you may fall all the way into the eternal sleep of death. Following the arguments, I have presented in this thesis, I venture that we can learn more about the state's violences in Rwanda by framing them, not mainly as an effort to get to a Scottian technocrat's utopia, but as the messy production of *aharyana*, an itchy and uncertain place. As proposed by many of my respondents and by other researchers (e.g. Purdeková 2015) this form of uncertainty might be deliberately pursued by RPF, following the rationale that they "can remain in power only so long as they keep moving and set everything around them in motion" (Arendt 1958, 308). Adding to the motion mania that serves a purpose, however, as I have argued in this thesis, *aharyana* is also produced by the violences that spill over. As a Kinyarwanda proverb says: *Igisiga cy'urwara rure rure*

cyitobora inda, a bird of prey with a very long claw will rip open its own stomach.

Which brings me to the third and final suggestion for taking these explorations further. Based on the fragmented and shifting subjectivities I have characterized, I put forward the idea that we might understand some compliant bodies as becoming less useful to authority, the more obedient they become. This is an interpretation that contrasts Foucault's characterization of discipline as a mechanism that makes the body "more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely" (Foucault 1995, 138). It is a general query, which could be undertaken in any context of arbitrary, violent and incoherent exercise of sovereignty, such as the European practices of migration control or the Danish municipalities' management of disability remunerations.

My entry point for posing this query is that, for example, the politics of improving bodies in the Rwandan education camps need to diagnose what the problem with these bodies is to begin with. But this diagnosis is hard to undertake when it comes to shifting subjectivities, who are modelling their responses according to their guesses at the best way to comply. In an interview about Iwawa in 2013, an employee in the Ministry of Youth and ICT told me that the problem with Rwanda's youth in general was that they had no direction in life. They did not know how to plan independently for their future according to a stable objective but kept hustling around doing one random business and then another. "They are not like you", he added. "You obviously have an objective in coming here and doing research, although I may not know what it is". In communicating to me that saw trough my use of *ubwenge* in presenting my research objectives, he also described his frustration in trying to install the will to conform with government objectives in unruly young bodies. Other researchers have described similar conversations with ministry officials in Rwanda, who complain about how hard it is to work with "mere peasants" who "are like infants" (Thomson 2013, 149; see also C. Newbury 2011; Sundberg 2016).

Part of how the objectives of Iwawa rehabilitation are stated, is that young men need to stop their unruly existence on the street, build a house, get married, get a vocation, and settle into a respectable life as respectable citizens. All of the young men living their lives on the street, I have interviewed, wanted this kind of life too. This wish for the future is also the pattern represented in Marc Sommers' statistical work on youth in Rwanda, and in Catherine Honeyman's ethnography of entrepreneurship education for Rwanda's youth (Sommers 2012; Honeyman 2016). In both studies, young people struggle to find their place in society and the economy due to high and changing government demands. For example, requirements for house construction and formal business registration are hard to meet for the majority of young people, who do not have the financial means to meet them (Sommers 2012; Honeyman 2016), and they are moreover subject to sudden changes in administrative practice. These studies show young people hustling from one vocation to another in large part as a result of the high and often drastically changing requirements from authorities.

I propose the interpretation that what was described by my interviewee in the ministry as too much hustling might be carried out by young people in Rwanda in an effort to meet the constantly changing demands of its government. Some of the phenomena that have been read as "foot-dragging non-compliance" (Rollason 2017, 48; see also Scott 2000, 29), I propose, might also be read as the vigilant attempts of subjects exposed to constantly changing demands at guessing the best way to comply. Instead of docile bodies that are amenable to change, some state practices might be read as producing tense and vigilant bodies. These bodies may be hard for authorities to work with, because they are continuously changing themselves in order to prepare for the infinitely ramifying possible futures created by the incoherent exercise of sovereignty.

9. References

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